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AN INTIMATE PORTRAIT OF R·L·S·

An Intimate Portrait of R·L·S·

LLOYD OSBOURNE

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1924

PR 5493 .O7 1924

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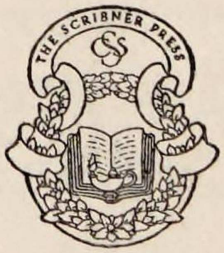
Printed in the United States of America



AN INTIMATE PORTRAIT OF R·L·S·

An Intimate Portrait of R L S by His Stepson, Lloyd Osbourne

STEVENSON AT TWENTY-SIX

It was at the old inn at Grèz-sur-Loing that I first saw Robert Louis Stevenson. I was eight years old, a tousled-haired, barefooted child who was known to that company of artists as "Pettifish." Though I sat at the long *table d'hôte* I was much too insignificant a person to be noticed by this wonderful new arrival, whose coming had caused such a stir.

But after the meal, when we all trooped down to the riverside to see the *Cigarette* and the *Arethusa* — the two canoes that had just finished the "Inland Voyage" — the stranger allowed me to sit in his, and even went to the trouble of setting up the little masts and sails for my amusement. I was very flattered to be treated so seriously —

R L S always paid children the compliment of being serious, no matter what mocking light might dance in his brilliant brown eyes — and I instantly elected him to a high place in my esteem.

While the others talked I appraised him silently. He was tall and slight, with light-brown hair, a small golden mustache, and a beautiful ruddy complexion; and was so gay and buoyant that he kept every one in fits of laughter. He wore a funny-looking little round cap, such as schoolboys used to have in England; a white flannel shirt, dark trousers, and very neat shoes. Stevenson had very shapely feet; they were long and narrow with a high arch and instep, and he was proud of them. However shabbily he might be dressed, he was always smartly shod. I remember being much impressed by his costume, which was in such contrast to that of his cousin, "Bob," who had preceded him to Grèz, and whom I already knew quite well. Bob was attired in a tattered blue jersey such as fishermen wore, trousers that needed no Sherlock Holmes to

decide that he was a landscape-painter, and wooden *sabots* of the slightly superior order.

All these lads — for they were scarcely more — were gloriously under the spell of the *Vie de Bohème;* they wanted to be poor, improvident, and reckless; they were eager to assert that they were outcasts and rebels. One of the Americans, who had an ample allowance, found enjoyment in wearing an old frock-coat and fez; another, equally well provided for, always wore expensive rings so as to have the extreme enjoyment of pawning them; but to some poverty was no masquerade, and was bitter enough. I doubt if poor little Bloomer had more than a spare shirt to his name, or ever enough buttons for his one shabby suit. Once he had been refused admission to the Luxembourg Gallery as "indecently clothed." It was supposed to be a wonderful joke, but Bloomer's fine, sensitive face always winced when it was repeated in his presence.

It was the custom of them all to rail

at the respectable and well-to-do; R L S's favorite expression was "a common banker," used as one might refer to a common laborer. "Why, even a common banker would renig at a thing like that" — "renig" being another favorite word. I got the impression that people with good clothes, and money in their pockets, and pleasant, big houses were somehow odious, and should be heartily despised. They belonged to a strange race called Philistines, and were sternly to be kept in their place. If any had dared install themselves in the Hotel Chevillon they would have found it a nest of hornets.

R L S always said he hoped to die in a ditch. He must have dwelt on it at great length, and with all his matchless humor, for, while I have forgotten the details, the picture of him as a white-haired and expiring wanderer is ineffaceably fixed in my mind. It cost me many a pang that such was to be his end while common bankers jingled by in shining equipages, oblivious and scornful. But the tragedy that hung

over Bob was even worse. Bob had divided his modest patrimony into ten equal parts, and after spending one of these every year was to commit suicide at the end. I never saw him lay out a few coppers for tobacco without a quivery feeling that he had shortened his life.

Young as I was I could not help noticing that R L S and my mother were greatly attracted to each other; or rather how they would sit and talk interminably on either side of the dining-room stove while everybody else was out and busy. I grew to associate them as always together, and in a queer, childish way I think it made me very happy. I had grown to love Luly Stevenson, as I called him; he used to read the "Pilgrim's Progress" and the "Tales of a Grandfather" to me, and tell me stories "out of his head"; he gave me a sense of protection and warmth, and though I was far too shy ever to have said it aloud, he seemed so much like *Greatheart* in the book that this was my secret name for him.

When autumn merged into early winter and it was time for us to return to Paris, I was overjoyed when my mother said to me: "Luly is coming, too."

STEVENSON AT TWENTY-EIGHT

I WAS ten when my mother left Paris and came to London, to spend several months before sailing for New York on the way to California. R L S was away somewhere, and it was his cousin "Bob" who met us at Dover, and took us to our lodgings at 7 Radnor Street, Chelsea.

It was a mean little house in a mean little street, and was as dingy and depressing as cheap London lodgings usually are. But the Turners, who kept the place, were extremely pleasant people. Mrs. Turner was a big, jolly matronly woman who used to call me "little Frenchie," and give me tremendous hugs. Mr. Turner, who was the original of William Dent Pitman in the "Wrong Box," contributed nothing to the family exchequer except the shavings from his wood-carving, and many moralizations about "*h*'Art" as a career. He was really a very odd and

charming person, with possibly more ability than we gave him credit for. Later on at least he became comparatively affluent and achieved a modest fame.

When R L S finally came I was conscious of a subtle change in him; even to childish eyes he was more assured, more mature and responsible. I was quite awed by his beautiful blue suit with its double-breasted coat, and the new stiff felt hat he threw on one side; and there was much in his eager talk about "going to press," and "closing the forms," and Henley "wanting a middle" about such and such a subject. He was now connected with a new weekly, called *London*, and evidently found the work very congenial and amusing. He was constantly dashing up in cabs, and dashing away again with the impressive prodigality that apparently journalism required. Indeed, he seemed extraordinarily happy in his new occupation, and was full of zest and high spirits.

I was greatly fascinated by the cane he carried. In appearance it was just an ordi-

nary and rather slender walking-stick, but on lifting it one discovered that it was a steel bludgeon of considerable weight. R L S said it was the finest weapon a man could carry, for it could not go off of itself like a pistol, nor was it so hard to get into action as a sword-cane. He said that in a tight place there was nothing to equal it, and somehow the impression was conveyed that journalism often took a man into very dangerous places. When he forgot it, as he often did, I was always worried until he returned.

One evening, with a kind of shyness he never outgrew, he produced a manuscript from his pocket, and read aloud "Will o' the Mill." Though I understood very little of it, its melodious cadence affected me profoundly, and I remember being so pleased with my mother's enthusiasm. R L S beamed with pleasure; he loved to have his work praised; and he put several questions, as he was always wont to do, for the sheer delight of prolonging such precious moments. Unlike most authors, he read

aloud incomparably well, endowing words and phrases with a haunting quality that lingered in one's ears afterward. I have never heard any one to equal him: the glamour he could give, the stir of romance, the indescribable emotion from which one awoke as though from a dream.

At Grèz a young Irish painter had once presented a new arrival to the assembled company after dinner, and in doing so had mockingly labelled the various *habitués*. R L S he had described as "Louis Stevenson — Scotch literary mediocrity." The phrase had stung R L S to the quick; it was one of the very few slights he kept alive in his memory. I remember that after he had finished "Will o' the Mill" and was still in the glow of my mother's praise, he murmured something about its not being so bad for "Scotch literary mediocrity."

Later he brought a story that was the germ of the "Suicide Club," and was about a stranger who had taken a train for some commonplace destination, and who, falling into conversation with his talkative and

very queer fellow passengers, suddenly discovered that they were a band of would-be suicides. The train in an hour or more was to fly at full speed over a precipice. The point of the tale was less its sensationalism than the startling conversation of men suddenly freed from all reticences.

My principal recollection of it was the unquenchable laughter it provoked; it was unheard of at that epoch to take such liberties with fiction; everybody was convulsed except my rather wondering little self, who was in a shiver about the unfortunate man who thought he was going to Canterbury or some such place, and who was being persuaded, very much against his will — but with incontrovertible logic — that life was a failure, and that he was very lucky to be on such a train.

From this sprang the "Suicide Club" series which R L S wrote shortly afterward, and which he read aloud to us in our cheerless sitting-room. Although Stevenson enjoyed them hugely he attached no importance to them; it was enough that

they filled a few empty columns of *London*, and brought in a few pounds. They attracted no notice whatever, and in the bottom of his heart I believe R L S was just a little ashamed of them. I know at least that when it was suggested a few years later to publish them in book form he emphatically demurred on the ground that it might hurt his reputation.

Meanwhile the hour of parting was drawing near. I had not the slightest perception of the quandary my mother and R L S were in, nor what agonies of mind their approaching separation was bringing; and doubtless I prattled endlessly about "going home," and enjoyed all our preparations, while to them that imminent August spelled the knell of everything that made life worth living. But when the time came I had my own tragedy of parting, and the picture lives with me as clearly as though it were yesterday. We were standing in front of our compartment, and the moment to say goodbye had come. It was terribly short and sudden and final, and before I could realize

it R L S was walking away down the long length of the platform, a diminishing figure in a brown ulster. My eyes followed him, hoping that he would look back. But he never turned, and finally disappeared in the crowd. Words cannot express the sense of bereavement, of desolation that suddenly struck at my heart. I knew I would never see him again.

STEVENSON AT TWENTY-NINE

MONTEREY in 1879 was a sleepy old Mexican town, with most of its buildings of sun-dried bricks, called *adobe*. Fashionable people could be told by the amount of silver embellishments on their saddles, bridles, and spurs, and how richly they jingled as they passed. The principal street — Alvarado Street — named after Cortez's redoubtable, golden-haired lieutenant, and down which it was always a point of honor to gallop at breakneck speed, no matter how trifling your business, was decorated at the corners by half-buried old Spanish cannon, which, with the breeches uppermost, served as hitching-posts for horses.

A whale's jaw, in the shape of a gigantic wish-bone — or an inverted V — often enframed a garden-gate; and the vertebræ were the favorite paving of those who took

pride in their houses or shops. It was Mexico's last stronghold in the *irredenta* of California; and as its only industries were the catching of an occasional whale by Genoese with silver earrings, and the export of dried fish to China by Chinese with pigtails and the ability to withstand the smell, it offered no inducements to young Americans coming West to seek their fortune.

Our home was a small, two-storied, rose-embowered *adobe* cottage fronting on Alvarado Street; my mother rented it from two old Spanish ladies named Bonifacio, who lived in an upper part of it in a seclusion comparable to that of the Man with the Iron Mask. The only time they ever betrayed their existence was when the elder would scream at me in Spanish from an upper window to leave the calf alone. Our back yard pastured this promising young animal, and it was an inspiriting pastime to lasso it, especially from the back of my pony when my mother and grown-up sister were absent. But Señora Bonifacio was never absent, though always slow in com-

ing into action. Perhaps it was to dress herself in the funeral-black dress and *mantilla* that I grew to associate as an inseparable part of playing with the calf.

It was here one morning in our sitting-room that my mother looked down at me rather oddly, and, with a curious brightness in her eyes, said: "I have news for you. Luly's coming."

I think R L S must have arrived the next day. I remember his walking into the room, and the outcry of delight that greeted him; the incoherence, the laughter, the tears; the heart-welling joy of reunion. Until that moment I had never thought of him as being in ill health. On the contrary, in vigor and vitality he had always seemed among the foremost of those young men at Grèz; and though he did not excel in any of the sports he had shared in them exuberantly. Now he looked ill, even to my childish gaze; the brilliancy of his eyes emphasized the thinness and pallor of his face. His clothes, no longer picturesque but merely shabby, hung loosely on his shrunken body; and

there was about him an indescribable lessening of his alertness and self-confidence.

This fleeting impression passed away as I grew more familiar with him in our new surroundings. Certainly he had never seemed gayer nor more light-hearted, and he radiated laughter and good spirits. His talk was all about the people he was meeting, and he gave me my first understanding of the interest to be derived from human nature. The Genoese, for instance, whom I had always regarded as dangerous monsters, and whose only English phrase was in reference to cutting little boys' livers out, were revealed as the kindest sort of people, who were always helping any one in distress. That he should visit one of this despised race in hospital, and read aloud to him a newspaper in his own gibberish, at first horrified me; and that he should be seen walking confidentially along the street with the town drunkard, even were it in one of Bob Hammil's rare moments of sobriety, was another shock; and when one night, in all stealth and secrecy, he helped to print

and paste up everywhere a small broadside denouncing the Spanish priest, "Father Two-Bits," for his heartlessness and rapacity, I was a good deal more overcome, I imagine, than the scoundrelly old victim himself. Young as I was I knew how men could be waylaid and stabbed in those unlit streets at night, and I trembled for Luly, and wished he had more sense.

His concluding enormity was to set the woods on fire, and though he was very conscience-stricken about it he had no realization of the summary punishment that might be meted out to him. There was a tradition in Monterey of a man having been lynched for this offense, and my hair nearly stood on end. I shall never forget my relief when he promised my mother, with appropriate solemnity, though with a twinkle in his eyes, that never, never, never so-help-him-God, would he ever let as much as a whisper of this crime pass his lips.

I was old enough to appreciate how poor he was, and it tore at my boyish heart that he should take his meals at a grubby little

restaurant with men in their shirt-sleeves, and have so bare and miserable a room in the old *adobe* house on the hill. Conceive my joy, therefore, when one day he burst in with the news of a splendid job, and prolonged the suspense by making us all try to guess what it was; and my crushing disappointment when it turned out to be as a special reporter on the local paper at two dollars a week.

It was supposed to be a great joke, and I laughed with the rest; but on my part it was a sad and wondering pretence. Two dollars meant eight meals at the fishermen's restaurant. What was to become of poor Luly, who daily looked thinner and shabbier? But afterward my mother reassured me, and I was thrilled to hear of what "experience" meant to a writer, and how in reality Monterey was a kind of gold mine in which Luly was prospering extraordinarily, little though he looked it. Then my father came down for a short stay, his handsome, smiling face just a little clouded, and with a curious new intonation in his voice

during his long closeted talks with my mother. He was a tall, very fine-looking man, with a pointed golden beard, and a most winning and lovable nature; I loved him dearly, and was proud of his universal popularity. But he had two eccentricities of which I was much ashamed — he took a cold tub every morning, and invariably slept in pajamas.

The only other person I had ever known to wear pajamas was our Chinese cook, and I regarded my father's preference for them as a dreadful sort of aberration. In comparison the daily cold bath shrank into merely a minor breach of the conventions.

I had looked forward eagerly to his visit, and it was disconcerting to find him so preoccupied and with so little time to devote to me. He seemed forever to be talking with my mother in a seclusion I was not allowed to disturb. Once as I was studying my lessons in an adjoining room and felt that strangely disturbing quality in their subdued voices — reproaches on her side and a most affecting explanation on his of his

financial straits at the time of my little brother's death — I suddenly overheard my mother say, with an intensity that went through me like a knife: "Oh, Sam, forgive me!"

I knew nothing of what all this meant until shortly afterward as I was taking a walk with Stevenson. He was silent and absorbed; I might not have been there at all for any attention he paid me. Ordinarily a walk with him was a great treat and a richly imaginative affair, for at a moment's notice I might find myself a pirate, or a redskin, or a young naval officer with secret despatches for a famous spy, or some other similar and tingling masquerade. But this walk had been thoroughly dull; we had remained ourselves, and not a breath of romance had touched us; and Luly's pace had been so fast, besides, that my little legs were tired.

All at once he spoke, and here again was this strange, new intonation, so colorless and yet so troubling, that had recently affected the speech of all my elders. "I want

to tell you something," he said. "You may not like it, but I hope you will. I am going to marry your mother."

I could not have uttered a word to save my life. I was stricken dumb. The question of whether I were pleased or not did not enter my mind at all. I walked on in a kind of stupefaction, with an uncontrollable impulse to cry — yet I did not cry — and was possessed of an agonizing feeling that I ought to speak, but I did not know how, nor what.

But all I know is that at last my hand crept into Luly's, and in that mutual pressure a rapturous sense of tenderness and contentment came flooding over me. It was thus we returned, still silent, still hand in hand, still giving each other little squeezes, and passed under the roses into the house.

STEVENSON AT THIRTY-ONE

DAVOS in 1881 consisted of a small straggling town where nearly all the shops were kept by consumptives. It possessed a charity sanitarium, and three large hotels, widely separated from one another, in which one could die quite comfortably. It was then the "new Alpine cure" for tuberculosis; and its altitude, its pine woods, and its glorious winter sunshine were supposed to work wonders. For five months of the year — "the season" — it was buried in snow and rimmed about with dazzling white peaks. Snow, snow, snow; icicled trees; a frozen little river; a sense of glinting and sparkling desolation — such was the place we had come to.

The visitors at the hotels were nearly all English, and though a considerable proportion of them died, it was amazing what a gay and animated life they led. The uncertain tenure of life engendered recklessness

even in the staidest. There were wild love-affairs, tempestuous jealousies, cliques and coteries of the most belligerent description, and an endless amount of gossip and back-biting. In our hotel besides, were eleven English clergymen of every shade of orthodoxy, who made a really remarkable amount of commotion out of their differences.

The dead were whisked away very unobtrusively. You might meet Miss Smith coming out of room 46, say — and then suddenly realize that this had been Mrs. Robinson's room, and that you had not seen her for some time. People you had not seen for some time could usually be found in the cemetery, though their intervening travels had been marvellously screened from notice. The only note of tragedy that was ever apparent was at the weekly weighing of patients. This was done in public, and one had but to look at the faces to read the verdict of the scales — consternation in those who were losing; anxiety in the stationary; an elation that was almost childish amongst the gainers, who would shout out

"two pounds," or whatever it was, with offensive triumph in their voices, and oblivious of the baleful glances cast at them.

Fortunately R L S stood the weekly ordeal very creditably. Davos agreed with him; he steadily gained weight, and was unquestionably better. My mother and he kept themselves somewhat aloof from the others, and though friendly and approachable were never drawn into the passionate enmities and intimacies of the place. Stevenson was never much at ease with ordinary, commonplace English people, possibly because they always regarded him with suspicion. He had untidy hair, untidy clothes, unconventional convictions, no settled place — at that time — in the scheme of things; and was moreover married to a *divorcée*. The Hotel Belvidere thought very little of him, one way or the other, and his only real friend was Christian, the head waiter, who, like many Swiss of mediocre position, was an extremely intellectual man, with an understanding and outlook far above the average. Together they would

pace the empty dining-room for an hour at a time in profound and interminable discussions while the tables were being spread for the next meal.

This was a thoroughly boring and unprofitable winter for Stevenson. His small bedroom was not conducive to work, and he was terribly lacking besides in any incentive. In a sort of desperation he began a novel for my amusement, called "The Squaw Man," but it never got beyond three chapters. This was the only time in his life when I remember his having anything like mental inertia. It is true he wrote; he was always writing; but fruitlessly, laboriously, and without any sustaining satisfaction. He often had an air of not knowing what to do with himself, and it was in this humor that he often came to my room to join me at play with my tin soldiers, or to interest himself in my mimic enterprises. I had a small printing-press, and used to earn a little money by printing the weekly concert programmes and other trifling commissions; and growing ambitious I became a pub-

lisher. My first venture was "Black Canyon, or Life in the Far West," a tiny booklet of eight pages, and both the spelling and the matter were entirely original; my second was "Not I, and Other Poems by R L Stevenson," price sixpence. How thunderstruck we should have been to know that forty years afterward these were to figure in imposing catalogues as: STEVENSONIANA, EXCESSIVELY RARE, DAVOS PRESS, and be priced at sixty or seventy guineas apiece.

Once we were caught in the act of playing with our soldiers on the floor by a visitor who had come to see me "on business." He was a robust, red-faced, John Bull sort of person, and I shall never forget his standing there in the doorway and shaking with tremendous guffaws at finding R L S thus employed. Stevenson crimsoned to the ears, and, though he pretended to laugh too, our play was spoiled for the morning.

One of the inmates of the hotel was a gaunt, ill-dressed, sallow young woman, the wife of a dying clergyman, who used to waylay me and ask in the most frightening way

whether I loved Jesus; and by degrees this embarrassing inquiry was enlarged to include Stevenson, with an urgent desire for information about his spiritual welfare. I tried my best to elude her, but I couldn't. She was always pouncing out of the unlikeliest places to grab my arm before I could escape. Later she made a point of descending to the dining-room at the very early and unfrequented hour that Stevenson breakfasted, and started the habit of passing him little notes — all about his soul, and the sleepless nights his spiritual danger was causing her.

Stevenson was as polite and considerate as he was to every one; too polite and considerate, for one morning another breakfaster — a young man who habitually sat near us — detected the transfer of one of these little notes, and that night, swelling with self-righteousness, pointedly ignored Stevenson, and made a stage-play of speaking only to my mother.

This led to an explanation in our bedroom. The young man was sent for, the

notes were shown him in the presence of my mother, I gave my childish evidence, and R L S was exonerated. But my principal recollection was his zest in the whole little drama — the unjust accusation, the conspicuous public affront borne in silence, the thumping vindication with its resultant apologies and expressions of regret, and finally the stinging little sermon on scandal and scandal-mongers.

For a month afterward he never went down to breakfast without me; and I was told — vastly to my pride and self-importance — to interpose myself between him and the sallow young lady, and make it impossible for her to slip any more notes into his hand. But she did not give up easily. Though she wrote no more notes, and soon afterward went away at her husband's death, she sent me post-cards for nearly a year — post-cards quite palpably intended for my stepfather. She was still sleepless, and in a greater torment than ever; and the word "love" — always in reference to Jesus — was invariably underscored.

STEVENSON AT THIRTY-TWO

Our second winter at Davos was infinitely pleasanter than the first. We were now installed in a *châlet* of our own, with a cook, and plenty of room for all of us. R L S had brought back the half-finished manuscript of "Treasure Island," begun that summer at Braemar, and with it a revived ardor for work. The *châlet* was bathed in sunshine, and had a delightful outlook over the whole valley; and its seclusion was the more welcome after the crowded hotel, and the enforced intimacy with uncongenial people. R L S seemed to expand in this homelike atmosphere, and his contentment and satisfaction were most apparent.

Before leaving Scotland he had applied for the vacant and highly paid professorship of English literature at Edinburgh University; and full of this new ambition

— which had he achieved it would have quickly ended his life in that harsh climate — he gave me a course of trial lectures to see how well he could acquit himself. No wonder that my mother used to smile. He would walk up and down sonorously addressing the class — which was I, very self-conscious and uncomfortable — and roll out with daunting solemnity such phrases as: "Gentlemen, before we proceed further I must beg your special attention to one of the most significant phases . . ." "Gentlemen, before we can review the condition of England in the year 1337, we should first envisage the general culture of Europe as a whole." "Gentlemen, I hope none of you will make the fatal mistake of undervaluing the great share, the gigantic share that the Church, in spite of its defects . . ."

I was overwhelmed by his commendation.

"I have no fear now," he said to my mother. "Lloyd has shown me that I have the ability to hold a class's attention and interest; some of it has been over his head,

of course, but I can feel that he has grasped my essential points, and has followed me with quite a remarkable understanding."

In spite of my pride I felt a dreadful little hypocrite. Except for the word "gentlemen," and some sanguinary details of mediæval life, the lectures had slid off me like water off a duck's back.

It was about this time I noticed how much darker R L S's hair was becoming. It had turned to a dark brown, and was so lank that at a little distance it appeared almost black. The hair has a curious way of reflecting one's physical condition; and judging by this criterion R L S must have been very ill. He no longer tobogganed with me, and seldom walked as far as the town — about a mile distant. Usually he contented himself with pacing up and down his veranda, or descending to the foot of our hill to drop in on John Addington Symonds.

I remember Symonds very clearly; of medium height, trimly bearded; in his later thirties; he wore well-cut clothes, and had

an aristocratic air that was reserved without being disdainful. His evident respect and affection for Stevenson, as well as the cordial way he always included me in his greeting, quite won my heart. His friendship seemed to confer distinction, and I was conscious that we were the only people in Davos to be similarly honored. He always came primed for a talk — the carry-over of a previous conversation — and one could almost see the opening paragraph forming itself on his lips.

But the influence of such men — academic, and steeped in the classics — was always subtly harmful to Stevenson, who had what we would call now an "inferiority complex" when in contact with them. Their familiarity with the ancient Greeks and Romans seemed to emphasize his own sense of shortcoming; made him feel uneducated, and engaged in unimportant tasks; put him out of conceit with himself and his work. Even as a boy I could feel the veiled condescension Symonds had for him; and Stevenson's acquiescent humility at his own

lack of a university training. If Symonds had read the early part of "Treasure Island" — now conceded to be one of the great masterpieces of English — I doubt if he would have found anything to admire in it; but rather a renewed concern that so brilliant and unschooled a mind should waste itself. In his ardor to academize Stevenson, and make him classicly respectable, he even ferreted out a scarcely known Greek author, and suggested that R L S should collate all the scraps of information about him and write a "Life."

All Stevenson's creative work was done in the morning, though in those days before typewriters an author had an interminable amount of writing to do that was merely copying, and involved no mental effort. The writers of to-day never have "scrivener's cramp," which pursued R L S all his life, and which caused him often to hold his pen between his second and third fingers when the index-finger was useless. His preference was for white, ruled foolscap paper, chosen because it approximated in

his writing to a "*Cornhill* page" of five hundred words. His first essays had been taken by the *Cornhill Magazine,* and its page established for him a measure of computation. He calculated the length of all his work in "*Cornhill* pages" long after he had ceased all connection with the magazine itself, and indeed as long as he lived.

I think he found rewriting a very soothing pastime, and would not have thanked anybody for a mechanical short cut; it was an equivalent, and a much pleasanter one, for the knitting and bead-stringing that doctors nowadays so often enforce on their patients; and it had the agreeable quality that he could pause as long as he liked over a word or a phrase that was not quite to his liking, and polish endlessly. Those who criticise R L S for his excessive particularity are mistaken in their judgment. It was this rewriting and polishing that helped to keep him alive.

But in our second winter in Davos he wrote too little to have much of this aftermath, and was thrown very much on me

for the distraction of his afternoons. A more delightful playfellow never lived; my memory of that winter is one of extraordinary entertainment. He engraved blocks and wrote poems for the two tiny books I printed on my press; he painted scenery for my toy theatre — a superb affair, costing upward of twenty pounds and far beyond our purse — that had been given me on the death of the poor lad who had whiled away his dying hours with it at the Belvidere; helped me to give performances and slide the actors in and out on their tin stands, as well as imitating galloping horses, or screaming screams for the heroine in distress. My mother, usually the sole audience, would laugh till she had to be patted on the back, while I held back the play with much impatience for her recovery. But best of all were our "war games," which took weeks to play on the attic floor.

These games were a naïve sort of "kriegspiel," conceived with an enormous elaboration, and involving six hundred miniature lead soldiers. The attic floor was made into

a map, with mountains, towns, rivers, "good" and "bad" roads, bridges, morasses, etc. Four soldiers constituted a "regiment," with the right to one shot when within a certain distance of the enemy; and their march was twelve inches a day without heavy artillery, and four inches with heavy artillery. Food and munitions were condensed in the single form of printers' "M's," twenty to a cart, drawn by a single horseman, whose move, like that of all cavalry, was the double of the infantry. One "M" was expended for every simple shot; four "M's" for every artillery shot — which returned to the base to be again brought out in carts. The simple shots were pellets from little spring-pistols; the artillery shots were the repeated throws of a deadly double sleeve-link.

Here absurdity promptly entered, and would certainly have disturbed a German staff-officer. Some of our soldiers were much sturdier than others and never fell as readily; on the other hand, there were some dishearteningly thin warriors that

would go down in dozens if you hardly looked at them; and I remember some very chubby and expensive cavalrymen from the Palais Royal whom no pellets could spill. Stevenson excelled with the pistol, while I was a crack shot with the sleeve-link. The leader who first moved his men, no matter how few, into the firing range was entitled to the first shot. If you had thirty regiments you had thirty shots; but your opponent was entitled to as many return shots as he had regiments, regardless of how many you had slaughtered in the meanwhile.

This is no more than a slight sketch of the game, which was too complicated for a full description, and we played it with a breathlessness and intensity that stirs me even now to recall. That it was not wholly ridiculous but gave scope for some intelligence is proved by the fact that R L S invariably won, though handicapped by one-third less men. In this connection it may be interesting to know what a love of soldiering R L S always had. Once he told me that if he had had the health he would

have gone into the army, and had even made the first start by applying for a commission in the yeomanry — which illness had made him forego. On another occasion he asked me who of all men I should most prefer to be, and on my answering "Lord Wolseley," he smiled oddly as though somehow I had pierced his own thoughts, and admitted that he would have made the same choice.

One conversation I heard him have with a visitor at the *châlet* impressed me irrevocably. The visitor was a fussy, officious person, who after many preambles ventured to criticise Stevenson for the way he was bringing me up. R L S, who was always the most reasonable of men in an argument, and almost over-ready to admit any points against himself, surprised me by his unshaken stand.

"Of course I let him read anything he wants," he said. "And if he hears things you say he shouldn't, I am glad of it. A child should early gain some perception of what the world is really like — its baseness,

its treacheries, its thinly veneered brutalities; he should learn to judge people and discount human frailty and weakness, and be in some degree prepared and armed for taking his part later in the battle of life. I have no patience with this fairy-tale training that makes ignorance a virtue. That was how I was brought up, and no one will ever know except myself the bitter misery it cost me."

Certainly this frankness gave a great charm to our intercourse and a mental stimulation I shall always be grateful for. But some of Stevenson's fancies I absorbed with the soberer facts of life. One in particular was his ineradicable conviction that gold spectacles were the badge of guile. Like Jim Hawkins being warned about the one-legged sea-cook, I was bidden to be watchful of people in gold spectacles. They were deceitful, hypocritical, and flourished on spoliation; they were devoid of all honor and honesty; they went about masked with gold spectacles and apparent benevolence to prey on all they could. I often felt what

a good thing it was that they were so plainly marked.

What a story must lie behind this fantasy of Stevenson's! One asks oneself who was this man with the gold spectacles, and what dire part had he played in R L S's past? Perhaps a Lenôtre of some future generation will dig him out of his hiding-place and hold him up — gold spectacles and all — to the odium of our descendants.

STEVENSON AT THIRTY-FOUR

WHEN I came out to Hyères in 1884 I had been absent a year from my mother and R L S. A year is an immense period in a growing boy's life, and I was now almost sixteen, with the dawning perceptions of early manhood — a tall, diffident fellow of the embryo intellectual type, who had been promoted to have an overcoat for the first time, and was occasionally called "Mr." by short-sighted people.

I was aware of a curious change in my family, while in reality the change was largely in myself. I had expected to take up things where I had left off, and felt a little baffled and lonely as I readjusted myself to altered conditions. It was not that R L S was not extremely kind, or that anything was lacking in the warmth of his welcome. But somehow he had receded from me; and though my mother stuffed me with delicacies, and overflowed with confidences about

the new life and new interests, she had receded, too. Woggs, the Skye terrier, alone met me on the old basis. That year was nothing to Woggs; there was no recession about *him;* he jumped all over me and smelled the same boy.

This first impression of aloofness gradually disappeared, but on marshalling my recollections it does seem strange that I strolled so seldom with R L S, and talked with him so little, and have nothing of any very personal kind to recall. Perhaps the atmosphere of robust Philistinism I had brought from my English tutor's repelled him; perhaps the effort to turn me into a conventional and commonplace young Englishman had only been too successful. But whatever the explanation, it was at least the only time in my life when Stevenson and I were not delightfully intimate. My own idea is that the routine of his days was so pleasantly filled that I was hardly more than a supernumerary; too old for any childish appeal, and too immature for any other. I was in the nature of an interruption, to

be borne with amiably but exciting no special interest.

R L S looked very well, and much better than I last remembered him. His hair was cut short; he wore presentable clothes; and at a little distance, in a straw hat, he might have been mistaken for an ordinary member of society. The short black cape, or *pélerine*, that he always preferred to an overcoat, was a typically French garment, and in France, of course, aroused no comment. In fact I found he had become very much of a Frenchman, even to the little "*Impérial*" on his chin. Speaking French as fluently as his own language; as familiar with French literature and French politics as with English; nowhere more at home than in his adopted country, he had shed nearly everything English about him.

"La Solitude," as our cottage was called, was a most coquettish little place; it had been exhibited at the World's Fair, and had won the first prize in its class — and looked it. Even the flowers that grew all over it had the unreal quality of a stage-

setting. Passers-by, gazing up at it from the road below, could be heard commenting on how it had been moved, with every board and brick carefully numbered, from its triumphant exhibition in Paris. It might, indeed, have almost been called one of the sights of Hyères; and the outlook from it, with the islands in the distance, was superb. Here in the midst of a little garden was "La Solitude," with the air of asking you to stop for an ice or a souvenir post-card.

It is easy to understand what R L S wrote afterward, that the time he spent in Hyères was the happiest in his life. He was working hard and well; was gaining recognition and making a fair income; had many irons in the fire, or coming out of it: "Prince Otto," "The Silverado Squatters," "Penny Whistles" (afterward renamed the "Child's Garden of Verses"), and many essays that were later to become so famous. It is worth noting perhaps that his ambition for "Prince Otto" was inordinate; some of its chapters he rewrote as many as seven times; of all of his books, save the "Master of

Ballantrae" — and, later, "Weir," — it was closest to his heart. For the "Child's Garden," on the contrary, which will probably outlive all his work and has entered into the soul of the race, his attitude was more of an indulgent indifference once the poems had been collected. I remember his saying: "By Jove, I believe I could make a little book out of those things if I wrote a few more; they are trifling enough, but not without a certain charm."

The routine of his existence suited him to perfection — at his desk all the morning; then luncheon, with an excellent *vin du pays,* and never lacking a salad; a stroll afterward in the sunshine, to drop in and talk politics with old Le Roux, the wine-merchant, or to have a chat with his friend Powell, the English chemist. Then home to look over his correspondence and write a few letters, with an excellent little dinner to follow and a conversation shared by Valentine, our vivacious cook and maid of all work. She was a charming girl, far above her class, and with a sparkling sense of

humor, who reviewed the whole neighborhood and nightly brought its annals up to date.

Although R L S always wrote so feelingly about his friends it was remarkable how well he could do without them. Few men had so little need of intimacies as he. Human intercourse of some kind was essential; it was the breath of life to him; but any one with any originality of mind and power of expression would suffice. He was very happy with Le Roux, and Powell, and the dark, keen local doctor, and a young Englishman in a bright-blue coat (his coat lingers long after I have forgotten his name and his face), who was raising early vegetables for the market, and finding much entertainment if but little money in an enterprise so singular for a man of his class and position. R L S loved talk and argument and discussion; it refreshed him; exhilarated him; brought him home with brightened eyes and a good appetite. It was his form of cocktail.

It must be remembered that he was one

of the most prepossessed men that ever lived. Call him an egoist if you like; such is the common reproach of his critics; but it was his work that always came first, that animated all his thoughts, that was the consuming joy and passion of his life. Unconsciously I think he graded his friends by their interest in it; regarded them as helpful satellites who could assist and cheer him on his way. Doubtless this statement will be thought cynical — almost a disparagement. But it is neither. Stevenson offers the fascinating study of a man whose spiritual concentration kept him alive. He simply wouldn't die; refused to; and those who would have him different would not now be reading his books — because there would have been no books. In the light of modern psychology it is very plain what enabled him to hold death at bay till forty-four, while so many of his generation with the same disease, and infinitely less impaired, succumbed long before him. First, it was this tremendous prepossession for his work, and secondly, his invincible refusal

to become an invalid. He was never willing to coddle himself, or to acquiesce in illness if he could possibly avoid doing so. He would say, with his habitual emphasis and determination: "Oh, hell, what does it matter? Let me die with my boots on."

It has always been a satisfaction to me that he did. Unlacing them as he lay dead, that reiterated remark of his came back to me very poignantly. Intrepid to the end, he had had his wish, which was symbolic of so much more.

I often think it was a mistake he ever left Hyères; it was so entirely congenial and suited him so well, though the last word must be used in a relative sense. The reason was absurd. My mother, with a view of keeping up with the advance of medicine and gaining some hints that might help R L S, subscribed to the *Lancet* — the well-known medical weekly. It was the worst reading in the world for her, as it is for any layman who foolishly tries to trespass on a highly technical domain. Stevenson, true to himself and wiser, left it severely alone. But

my mother glued herself to it, and began to fill her mind with all sorts of bogeys. Vinegar was discovered to be full of perils; salads carried the eggs of tapeworms; salt hardened your arteries and shortened your days; heaven only knows what all she discovered in the way of lurking dangers, previously undreamed of; and when the climax came in an outbreak of cholera in the old part of the town, with a terrible death-roll amongst its poor, dirty, neglected inhabitants, she fell into a panic and began to work on R L S to abandon Hyères as a place too dangerous to live in.

Had it not been for the *Lancet*, I doubt if R L S would ever have left Hyères.

STEVENSON AT THIRTY-FIVE

"WENSLEYDALE" was one of a tall row of lodging-houses on the West Cliff of Bournemouth, overlooking the sands below, and with a gloriously sparkling view of the Needles and the Isle of Wight. In that Golden Age there was a whole race of people who kept such houses, and who made you extremely comfortable and often fed you admirably for a few shillings a week. The Great War seems to have swept them away. One wonders on what battlefields all those middle-aged ladies perished, for they have gone; and gone, too, their competence, cleanliness, and cheer; their brooches and rustling black and illegible weekly accounts, which, however small, were invariably larger than one expected.

It was lovely autumn weather when R L S and my mother arrived. They were in the highest spirits; everything pleased them; and although they were carrying all they possessed with them, and had neither

home nor plans — and ought to have been rather forlorn, one should think — they were as happy as grigs, and seemed not to have a care in the world. They were supposed to come for a few weeks to see a little of me before I left my tutor's to enter Edinburgh University; nothing was further from their minds than to remain in England; it was taken for granted that they would finally return to the Continent to seek another and a more hygienic Hyères. Little could they foresee that their visit to Bournemouth was destined to last almost three years; and was then to lead, not to France or Italy but to America and the South Sea Islands.

I am dwelling on the gaiety of those months at "Wensleydale" because it marked what might be called the end of an epoch in Stevenson's life. He was never afterward so boyish or so light-hearted; it was the final flare-up of his departing youth. The years that followed, however full they were of interest and achievement, were grayer; it was a soberer and a more

preoccupied man that lived them. The happy-go-lucky Bohemian who had been rich if he could jingle ten pounds in his pocket, and who talked so cheerfully of touring France in a caravan, giving patriotic lectures with a magic lantern on "The Incomparable Colonies of France" — with an ensuing collection in the lecturer's hat — was soon to discover that success had its penalties as well as its sweets. It was all inevitable of course; such hard work could not escape its reward, and none of us can keep back the clock. Stevenson is to be envied that he retained his youth as long as he did.

But he left it at "Wensleydale."

Henley came — a great, glowing, massive-shouldered fellow with a big red beard and a crutch; jovial, astoundingly clever, and with a laugh that rolled out like music. Never was there such another as William Ernest Henley; he had an unimaginable fire and vitality; he swept one off one's feet. There are no words that can describe the quality he had of exalting those about him;

of communicating his own rousing self-confidence and belief in himself; in the presence of this demigod, who thrilled you by his appreciation, you became a demigod god yourself, and felt the elation of an Olympian who never until then had known the tithe of what was in him. There is still a fellowship of those who proudly call themselves "Henley's young men." I hope it will not sound presumptuous to say I was the first. It certainly calls for some expression of modesty, for amongst them are some of the most brilliant men in England.

Even after all these years there is a surge in my heart as I recollect Henley; he shines through the mist with an effulgence; that magic voice rises out of the grave with its unforgotten cadences. He was the first man I had ever called by his surname; the first friend I had ever sought and won; he said the most flattering things of me behind my back, and intoxicated me by his regard. How I idolized him! He would not have been Henley had he not responded to this hero-worshipping boy. If we had been gay

before his coming, our gaiety was now intensified a hundredfold.

And he had come to make us all rich! Yes, the secret of Crœsus was in that shabby little black writing-case. We were enveloped in a gorgeous dream; the dingy walls of "Wensleydale" receded, and we found ourselves in a palace of "The Arabian Nights"; we gazed out over the sparkling sea, and it was our own yacht we saw in the offing, with the water foaming under her bows, and her bright flags streaming in the breeze. Dreams, dreams, and always the cadence of that unforgotten voice!

R L S was no longer to plod along as he had been doing; Henley was to abandon his grinding and ill-paid editorship; together they would combine to write plays — marvellous plays that would run for hundreds of nights and bring in thousands of pounds; plays that would revive the perishing drama, now hopelessly given over to imbeciles, who kept yachts and mistresses on money virtually filched from the public; plays that would be billed on

all the hoardings with the electrifying words "by Robert Louis Stevenson and William Ernest Henley."

R L S entered enthusiastically into this collaboration, though with his underlying Scotch caution I doubt if he allowed himself to be wholly transported into Henley's fairy-land. But he was stirred, nevertheless; shared to some degree, though reservedly, those ardent day-dreams of wealth; worked at the plays with extraordinary gusto and industry. "Beau Austin" was written in four days, and I shall never forget Henley reading it aloud — so movingly, so tenderly that my eyes were wet with tears. But deep down within me was a disappointment I tried hard to stifle. "Beau Austin" was beautiful, of course; it was a masterpiece — there could be no question of that; but was it likely to lessen the yachts and mistresses of the imbeciles? A doubting voice answered "No"; for as a constant patron of the imbeciles I found great pleasure in their plays, and was ashamed to admit I preferred them to "Beau Austin."

But disillusionment was slow in coming, even though the succeeding plays pleased me as little as the first. The gorgeous dream was not so easily wafted away. It persisted — for me at least — long after we had left that fairy palace on the West Cliff. But Stevenson, I think, came soonest out of the spell — was the first to rub his eyes and recover his common sense. His ardor certainly declined; in the interval of Henley's absences he very gladly returned to his own work, and had as a playwright to be resuscitated by his unshaken collaborator, who was as confident and eager as ever.

R L S lost not only the last flicker of his youth in "Wensleydale," but I believe also any conviction that he might become a popular dramatist.

"SKERRYVORE" was an unusually attractive suburban house, set in an acre and a half of ground; and its previous owner — a retired naval captain — had been at no little expense to improve and add to it. Somehow it was typical of an old sailor; it was so trim, so well arranged, so much thought had been given to its many conveniences. One felt it was a dream-come-true of long years passed at sea — even to the natty little stable, the miniature coach-house, and the faultlessly bricked court, faultlessly slanted to the central drain. Of course it had a pigeon-cote; what old seaman would be happy ashore without one? And through all my memories of "Skerryvore" run that melodious cooing and the flutter of wings on the lawn.

The house and five hundred pounds toward furnishing it were a wedding present to my mother from R L S's parents.

The wanderers were now anchored; over their heads was their own roof-tree; they paid rates and taxes, and were called on by the vicar; Stevenson, in the word he hated most of all, had become the "burgess" of his former jeers. Respectability, dulness, and similar villas encompassed him for miles in every direction.

In his heart I doubt if he really ever liked "Skerryvore"; he never spoke of it with regret; left it with no apparent pang. The Victorianism it exemplified was jarring to every feeling he possessed, though with his habitual philosophy he not only endured it, but even persuaded himself that he liked it. But so far as he had any snobbishness it was his conviction — which was really somewhat naïve — that artists were instinctive aristocrats, who never could be content in the middle class. I suppose when he said "artists" he meant himself, and certainly of all men he was the least fitted for ordinary English suburban life. Not that he saw much of it; he was virtually a prisoner in that house the whole time he

lived in it; for him those years in "Skerryvore" were gray, indeed.

His health throughout was at its lowest ebb; never was he so spectral, so emaciated, so unkempt and tragic a figure. His long hair, his eyes, so abnormally brilliant in his wasted face, his sick-room garb, picked up at random and to which he gave no thought — all are ineffaceably pictured in my mind; and with the picture is an ineffable pity. Once at sunset I remember him entering the dining-room, and with his cloak already about him, mutely interrogating my mother for permission to stroll in the garden. It had rained for several days and this was his first opportunity for a breath of outside air.

"Oh, Louis, you mustn't get your feet wet," she said in an imploring voice.

He made no protest; he was prepared for the denial; but such a look of despair crossed his face that it remains with me yet. Then still silent he glanced again toward the lawn with an inexpressible longing.

Afterward in Samoa I reminded him of

that little scene at a moment when his exile was weighing most heavily on him. We were both on horseback and had stopped for a cigarette; the palms were rustling in the breeze, and the lovely shores of Upolu far below were spread out before us in the setting sun. He gave a little shudder at the recollection I had evoked, and after a moody pause exclaimed: "And all for five minutes in a damned back yard! No, no, no, I would be a fool ever to leave Samoa!" And, as though to emphasize the contrast, dug the spurs into his horse and started off at a headlong gallop.

Of course his health varied. There were periods when he was comparatively well, when he would go to London to spend a few days. Once he even got as far as Paris; once he went to Dorchester to see Thomas Hardy, and continuing on to Exeter was overtaken by an illness that lasted three weeks and brought him to death's door. But in general he was a prisoner in his own house and saw nothing of Bournemouth save his own little garden. There could be

no pretense he was not an invalid and a very sick man. He had horrifying hemorrhages, long spells when he was doomed to lie motionless on his bed lest the slightest movement should restart the flow, when he would speak in whispers, and one sat beside him and tried to be entertaining — in that room he was only too likely to leave in his coffin.

How thus handicapped he wrote his books is one of the marvels of literature — books so robustly and aboundingly alive that it is incredible they came out of a sick-room; and such well-sustained books with no slowing down of their original impetus, nor the least suggestion of those intermissions when their author lay at the point of death. Those years in "Skerryvore" were exceedingly productive. The "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was written here; so was "Kidnapped"; so was "Markheim," and any number of his best short stories; so too, was the "Life of Fleeming Jenkin."

One day he came down to luncheon in

a very preoccupied frame of mind, hurried through his meal — an unheard-of thing for him to do — and on leaving said he was working with extraordinary success on a new story that had come to him in a dream, and that he was not to be interrupted or disturbed even if the house caught fire.

For three days a sort of hush descended on "Skerryvore"; we all went about, servants and everybody, in a tiptoeing silence; passing Stevenson's door I would see him sitting up in bed, filling page after page, and apparently never pausing for a moment. At the end of three days the mysterious task was finished, and he read aloud to my mother and myself the first draft of "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

I listened to it spellbound. Stevenson, who had a voice the greatest actor might have envied, read it with an intensity that made shivers run up and down my spine. When he came to the end, gazing at us in triumphant expectancy and keyed to a pitch of indescribable self-satisfaction — as

he waited, and I waited, for my mother's outburst of enthusiasm — I was thunderstruck at her backwardness. Her praise was constrained; the words seemed to come with difficulty; and then all at once she broke out with criticism. He had missed the point, she said; had missed the allegory; had made it merely a story — a magnificent bit of sensationalism — when it should have been a masterpiece.

Stevenson was beside himself with anger. He trembled; his hand shook on the manuscript; he was intolerably chagrined. His voice, bitter and challenging, overrode my mother's in a fury of resentment. Never had I seen him so impassioned, so outraged, and the scene became so painful that I went away, unable to bear it any longer. It was with a sense of tragedy that I listened to their voices from the adjoining room, the words lost but fraught with an emotion that struck at my heart.

When I came back my mother was alone. She was sitting, pale and desolate before the fire, and staring into it. Neither of us

spoke. Had I done so it would have been to reproach her, for I thought she had been cruelly wrong. Then we heard Louis descending the stairs, and we both quailed as he burst in as though to continue the argument even more violently than before. But all he said was: "You are right! I have absolutely missed the allegory, which, after all, is the whole point of it — the very essence of it." And with that, as though enjoying my mother's discomfiture and her ineffectual start to prevent him, he threw the manuscript into the fire! Imagine my feelings — my mother's feelings — as we saw it blazing up; as we saw those precious pages wrinkling and blackening and turning into flame!

My first impression was that he had done it out of pique. But it was not. He really had been convinced, and this was his dramatic amend. When my mother and I both cried out at the folly of destroying the manuscript he justified himself vehemently. "It was all wrong," he said. "In trying to save some of it I should have got hope-

lessly off the track. The only way was to put temptation beyond my reach."

Then ensued another three days of feverish industry on his part, and of a hushed, anxious, and tiptoeing anticipation on ours; of meals where he scarcely spoke; of evenings unenlivened by his presence; of awed glimpses of him, sitting up in bed, writing, writing, writing, with the counterpane littered with his sheets. The culmination was the "Jekyll and Hyde" that every one knows; that, translated into every European tongue and many Oriental, has given a new phrase to the world.

The writing of it was an astounding feat from whatever aspect it may be regarded. Sixty-four thousand words in six days; more than ten thousand words a day. To those who know little of such things I may explain that a thousand words a day is a fair average for any writer of fiction. Anthony Trollope set himself this quota; it was Jack London's; it is — and has been — a sort of standard of daily literary accomplishment. Stevenson multiplied it by

ten; and on top of that copied out the whole in another two days, and had it in the post on the third!

It was a stupendous achievement; and the strange thing was that, instead of showing lassitude afterward, he seemed positively refreshed and revitalized; went about with a happy air; was as uplifted as though he had come into a fortune; looked better than he had in months.

When I abandoned college at the end of my second year, and returned to "Skerryvore" with the intention of becoming an author myself under R L S's tuition, I was dismayed to find that he had become religious. Not in the ordinary sense, but as a sort of disciple of Tolstoy's, then at the crest of his fame. With bewilderment I listened to the sentence about "the area of suffering," and others indistinguishable from the Sermon on the Mount. Christianity without Christ — that was about what it amounted to — and R L S expatiated on it at great length, and with an air of intense earnestness.

To a young collegian, fresh from an austere and uncongenial Scottish household, where the playing-cards were hidden when the minister called, and Sunday was almost entirely spent in church, it was disconcerting to the last degree to find his home thus altered for the worse. My beloved Louis, one of the most fiery of men, whose very mien as he once raised a row about a corked bottle of wine had emptied half a restaurant — to see him thus reduced to a turning-the-other-cheek condition was nothing less than appalling. I wrestled with him as best I could, but ineffectually. Tolstoyism had always its mild but persistent answer, which after all was rather irrefutable: "Do nothing to increase the area of suffering, and in time all suffering will disappear."

R L S was then steeped, not only in Tolstoy, but in all modern Russian literature. Perhaps its sombre and hopeless tone suited his own sombre and hopeless life. One of the most dramatic of men, perhaps he here sought and discovered a striking rôle that he himself could fill despite his ill health

and imprisoned existence. But be that as it may, a nightmarish plan began to take shape in his mind, and one so typically Russian that I think it must have sprung from this source. To explain it more fully I must digress a little. He had been much worked up over the lawless state of Ireland, which was then filling the English press with revolting stories of boycotts and oppressions — people starving in the midst of plenty, their money refused at every shop; widows sitting beside dead husbands whom none would bury; cattle hamstrung; men struck down; women stripped and flogged; a most dreadful persecution of those who dared rent farms from which the previous tenants had been evicted by the British Government.

R L S's plan, though nightmarish, was quite simple. We were all to go to Ireland, rent one of these farms, and be murdered in due course. As R L S expressed it with an oratorical flourish: "The murder of a distinguished English literary man and his family, thus engaged in the assertion of

human rights, will arrest the horror of the whole civilized world and bring down its odium on these miscreants."

Such was the formula of practical Tolstoyism which, though it sounds incredibly absurd, R L S had the most serious intention of carrying out. Indeed, he was in the deadliest earnest, and my mother scarcely less so, unbelievable as it then seemed to me. I suspect, nevertheless, that she would have thwarted the project had it ever matured into action; looking back on it I remember she was much more calm than the circumstances warranted. But to all appearance I was the chief martyr in this Irish fantasy, I, who cared nothing about evicted farmers, nor "areas of suffering," nor figuring in a Russian romance ending in the death of a whole family of whom I was one. I wanted to learn to write; to strike out a modest career of my own; my head was full of boyish hopes and ambitions in which "dying to arrest the horror of the whole civilized world" was certainly not one. For me there was a shadow over

that whole period. I knew that every day brought Ireland nearer.

Then R L S's father died suddenly, and we all had to go to Edinburgh to attend the funeral. I returned soon after, but my mother and R L S remained several weeks. In the course of time two letters arrived, the first from my mother — such a heart-broken letter — saying that the doctors had ordered R L S to leave England at once for Colorado as the only means of prolonging his life. England was ended for him; he was never to set foot in it again. She wrote of her "little nest" and the unendurable wrench it would be to leave it. "Life had been too happy in Skerryvore — the envying gods had struck it down." It was all in this strain of anguish at abandoning her home for a future that loomed before her black indeed.

Expecting to find R L S's in a similar note of tragedy, I opened it — when it arrived a day or two later — with a sinking heart. But it was cheerful, almost jubilant; the prospect of Colorado or New Mexico

seemed to fill him with joy. Were we not to live in the wilds with rifles on our walls and bearskins on our mud floors! Sombreros, ha, ha! Mustangs, silver spurs, spaciousness, picturesque freedom; "Scottie" of the something or other ranch! There was not a word about cosey nests, nor envying gods, nor eternal farewells to happiness. None whatever. "*Vive la vie sauvage!*" He was plainly glad to be off, and the sooner the better. When at last he did return to "Skerryvore" it was in the same spirit of elation.

One might have thought that this was the ideal moment to go to Ireland; why Colorado and an uncertain search for health when in three weeks the whole matter could be so easily and definitely settled by bullets in our backs? But the mad idea had dropped from his mind, never to be mentioned again. As for Tolstoyism, it simply vanished into thin air and all the Russian novelists with it. R L S had become his own fiery self again, and as chivalrous and impulsive as Alan Breck, with whom he

had not a little in common. By nature there never was any one less submissive, and he resumed his ordinary character with unmistakable pleasure.

I have often wondered since whether the Irish venture had not its origin in an unsuspected desire to leave "Skerryvore" at any price. Hopelessly embedded there, locked in and double-locked, had he not seized on this as the one possible means of escape?

STEVENSON AT THIRTY-EIGHT

In 1888, Saranac was a little backwoods settlement in which log cabins were common, and venison one of the staples of diet. On the edge of the Canadian border, and encompassed by a trackless country of woods and lakes which had not then been abbreviated to "the Adirondacks," but was still called "the Adirondack Wilderness," it had in winter the isolation of an outpost of the snows.

Sleighs, snow-shoes, and frozen lakes; *voyageurs* in quaint costumes and with French to match; red-hot stoves and streaming windows; guides who spat, and looked like Leatherstocking; consumptives in bright caps and many-hued woollens gaily tobogganing at forty below zero; buffalo coats an inch thick; snow-storms, snow-drifts, Arctic cold; the sensation of rubbing snow on your congealed ears and unfortunate nose — of such was our new

home in which R L S was hoping to regain his health.

We had rented the half of a small house, and I hesitate to use the word "semi-detached" in regard to it from the simplicity of its separation. It stood bald and isolated on a bluff overlooking the river and was the kind of house that a prosperous guide would run up in his spare time with the help of the local carpenter. Its lack of conveniences may be imagined; except for the organ in the "parlor" it was starkly primitive. At times it was unbelievably cold, when one was really comfortable only in bed, with a hot soapstone at one's feet. We had made the mistake — or at least our neighbors had shaken their heads over it — of not blocking the big fireplace in our sitting-room, where we had our meals and spent most of our time.

"You'll sure frizz to death with that yar chimbley of yourn letting in all the air," said Leatherstocking, with a grin of not unpleasurable anticipation; and it certainly did let it in, and to such a degree that dur-

ing the blizzards we were chilled to the very marrow of our bones. But as all our windows were caulked with cotton-wool, and as otherwise we were sufficiently sealed in to sink to the bottom of the sea unscathed — perhaps we had not been as foolish as we seemed. The only fresh air that ever entered the place was down our despised chimney, and often the hearth before the fire was the coldest spot in the house.

Colorado had been foregone for Saranac, then in the beginning of its vogue as a cure for tuberculosis. R L S arrived there in an exhilaration of mind which of itself was likely to help him as much as the climate. When he stepped off our old cattle-boat, the *Ludgate Hill,* in which we had taken nineteen days to cross the Atlantic, it was to find himself famous. Hordes of reporters met him; the lobby of his hotel buzzed with callers; he was head-lined in all the papers — interviewed, photographed, lionized — his coming a veritable sensation. His reputation, silently spreading, silently infiltrating through a vast public, had suddenly

with a universal acclaim risen to a place second to no novelist's in England or America.

He was almost dumfounded; it was too incredible for belief; and at first he was inclined to ascribe it to American exuberance. But it was no flash in the pan, no temporary manifestation of excited journalism. It began to reverberate back from England, and took on the very convincing form of big checks and dazzling offers. From that time until his death he became, indeed, one of the most conspicuous figures in contemporary literature. That he enjoyed this sudden elevation goes without saying. He exulted in it; it did much to keep him alive; it gave him an assurance and an authority he had never felt before. In those nineteen days on the *Ludgate Hill,* he had passed from one epoch of his life to another. The recluse of "Skerryvore," working so hard in fancied obscurity, had sprung at a bound into world-wide fame.

At Plattsburg that autumn, as we were waiting on the platform to take the train

to Saranac, there occurred one of those incidents of which that time was so pleasurably full. The station-master came running along the line of assembled passengers with a telegram in his hand. After accosting several well-dressed men he stopped at last with obvious incredulity before Stevenson, and said: "Say, you ain't Mr. Stevens the famous author, are you? Yes? Well, I guess it must be you that's meant. I have a telegram here from Albany to put the private car at your disposal; and here's the money you just paid for your tickets — compliments of the company, and Mr. Burdick, the general manager."

Saranac suited R L S extremely well. He gained in weight; his spectral aspect disappeared; in a buffalo coat and astrakhan cap he would pace the veranda for hours, inhaling that piercing air which was so noticeably benefiting him. He worked hard, hard and well, first on a series of essays for *Scribner's Magazine* — "Random Memories," "A Chapter on Dreams," "Beggars," "The Lantern-Bearers," "Let-

ters to a Young Gentleman who Proposes to Embrace the Career of Art," "Pulvis et Umbra," "A Christmas Sermon," and others; then on the "Master of Ballantrae," which he half finished; and then, at the close of our stay and in a whirlwind three weeks of industry, on the "Wrong Box" — my own book, which had cost me a winter's toil.

This collaboration, if so it may be called, was conceived on the spur of the moment. R L S had finished the reading of my final draft, and I was sitting on the side of his bed in no little suspense for his verdict. It meant a great deal to me, for S. S. McClure had promised to publish the book if R L S thought it good enough.

"Lloyd, it is really not at all bad," he said musingly. "Some of it is devilishly funny; and I have burst out laughing again and again; your dialogue is often better than I could have done myself at thirty; there is no reason at all why McClure should not bring it out, and with any luck it might be a very successful book."

Then after a pause, he added, through the faint cloud of his cigarette smoke: "But of course it is unequal; some of it is pretty poor; and what is almost worse is the good stuff you have wasted — thrown away — just because you didn't know how to use it. It made my fingers itch as I read it. Why, I could take up that book, and in one quick, easy rewriting could make it *sing!*"

Our eyes met; it was all decided in that one glance.

"By God, why shouldn't I!" he exclaimed. "That is, if you don't mind?"

Mind!

I was transported with joy. What would-be writer of nineteen would not have been? It was my vindication; the proof I had not been living in a fool's paradise, and had indeed talent, and a future.

McClure, to whom I have just alluded, was then in the beginning of his meteoric career. Still in his twenties, vibrating with energy, endowed with an ability, initiative, and originality that at times almost ap-

proached genius — for surely there is genius in business as well as art? — he was one of the most inspiriting of men, and had a vital part in shaping our future destiny. Slight, blue-eyed, excessively fair, with hair the color of cinders that he constantly ruffled with his hands, he was ready at a moment's notice to take fire with excitement and to soar into the azure of dreams and millions from which Stevenson had constantly to pull him down by the legs, so to speak.

But to one of his many plans R L S responded with unqualified enthusiasm — to charter a large yacht, and to sail away for half a year or more in the Indian or Pacific Oceans, supporting the enterprise by monthly letters, which McClure was to syndicate at enormous mutual profit, guaranteed beforehand. It was undeniably practicable — no azure here, no pulling down of those slender legs — all R L S had to say was which ocean and when.

Ah, the happy times we had, with outspread maps and Findlay's "Directories of

the World"! Findlay, who in those massive volumes, could take the sailor anywhere, and guide him into the remotest bay by "the priest's small, white coral house on a cliff bearing N N E"; or "a peculiarly shaped rock, not unlike a stranded whale and awash at high tides, which when in line south half west with the flagstaff on the old calaboose insures an absolutely safe entrance into the dangerous and little-known harbor of Greater Bungo."

How I wish I had here those noble books to quote from, instead of trusting to my uncertain memory; but alas, they lie — these two particular volumes — in the ocean grave of my old friend, Captain Joshua Slocum, who disappeared in the *Spray* and was never heard of again.

"Master mariners should be on their guard against the treacherous character of these natives, and should on no account allow any of their crew ashore except armed, and in a considerable party. Excellent water can be had beside the dilapidated pier, built by the castaways of the *Dormouse* in 1868;

and for a few trinkets, preferably jew's-harps, the natives can be induced to cut wood of a fair quality." "Captain Prout, in the hermaphrodite brig *Emma*, in 1874, noted the unruly and licentious character of these island women, many of an extreme beauty and all as unclothed as Eve, with the resultant demoralization of his crew." "One of the peculiarities of this rarely visited group is the craving of the natives for sheep's teeth, which they string into necklaces and wear as ornaments. Captain McBawbee, of the iron bark *Pride of Scotia*, to whom we are indebted for this information, states that in 1873 he obtained eight beeves and eleven sizable swine for a pottle of these teeth that he had had the foresight to take with him."

Such was our reading, such the stuff our dreams were made of as the snow drove against our frozen windows; as the Arctic day closed in, gloomy and wild, and snow-shoes and buffalo coats were put by to steam in corners while we gathered round the lamp. Visions of palms while our ears

were yet tingling from the snow we had rubbed on to save them from frost-bite; cascading streams in tropic Arcadies, with water as clear as crystal, while our own bedroom jugs upstairs were as solid as so much rock; undraped womanhood, bedecked with flowers, frisking in vales of Eden, while we were wooled to the neck like polar explorers, and dared not even thaw too quickly for fear of chilblains.

With what ardor we sailed away on that unnamed ship, our hand in Findlay's, to put all the distance we could between fact and fancy! How we zigzagged over the charts, and sailed through this channel or avoided that in accordance with the great poet's instructions. Yes, poet — no lesser word can do him justice — for if ever there was *vers libre* to make the pulses dance, to stir the imagination and rouse one to the very zenith of romance, you will find it in these immortal volumes.

R L S had set his heart on the Pacific, but as there seemed no likelihood whatever of finding a suitable yacht in San Francisco,

it looked as though he would have to content himself with the Indian Ocean. There was a wealth of vessels to be had on the Eastern seaboard; and McClure, in paroxysms of excitement, was indefatigably submitting lists, with aides out in every direction combing all the ports from Maine to Florida. A ship was a ship to McClure, and in the same letter and with the same conviction he would proffer a floating steam palace of three thousand tons and a duck-shooting forty-footer, "with a nest of dories." I remember the unextinguishable laughter we had over this last sentence. "They sound like some kind of birds," wrote McClure, "but perhaps you will know what is meant."

When my mother left us in the Spring to visit her sister in California, our plans were so definitely leading toward the Indian Ocean that it was only in a joking spirit that R L S had said at parting:

"If you *should* find a yacht out there, mind you take it."

Six weeks later came the telegram that

was to have such a far-reaching effect on our lives:

"Can secure splendid sea-going schooner yacht Casco for seven hundred and fifty a month with most comfortable accommodation for six aft and six forward. Can be ready for sea in ten days. Reply immediately.

FANNY."

Stevenson answered:

"Blessed girl, take the yacht and expect us in ten days.

LOUIS."

STEVENSON AT THIRTY-NINE

WAIKIKI in 1889 consisted of twenty or thirty houses, set in large shady gardens, and bordering on the most incomparably lovely beach in the world — and the most incomparable water to swim in. At one end of the vast curve, of which this settlement was but a trifling part, rose the majestic outline of an extinct volcano, called Diamond Head; and at the other the lofty range of Waeanae, on which the sun set daily in glowing splendor. Here in Waikiki, four miles from Honolulu, R L S rented a house, and moved ashore from the *Casco* with everything we possessed — including several hundred pearl shells, a Marquesan drum, a sack of human hair ornaments, a large idol, a set of stone adzes, two match-boxes full of pearls, and numerous savage weapons, amongst which was the last club ever used in the Marquesas to fell a human being for the pot — a present from my

"blood-brother," Moipu, who had figured on that occasion.

The characteristic feature of an Hawaiian house is the *lanai*, or big sitting-room, without walls on one or two sides — trellises of creepers and flowers taking their place. This summer-house arrangement is only possible in such a perfect climate, and is extraordinarily pleasant to live in. Our *lanai* was unusually large, and my mother made it look very gay indeed, with some of our flags and pennants from the yacht and our pearl shells spread in rows on the wooden cross-pieces. Our Chinese cook, Ah Fu, had followed us from the yacht — a powerfully-built, frowsy-haired sort of Man Friday, not over twenty-five, who had been marooned as a boy on Hiva Oa, and was much more of a Marquesan than he was anything else. Thus equipped for modest housekeeping, and in love with our new surroundings, we watched the sinking topsails of the *Casco* with no more than a passing pang.

The seven months' cruise just concluded

had had a marvellous effect on R L S. He had become almost well; could ride, take long walks, dine out, and in general lead the life of a man in ordinary health. Such climates were supposed to be very harmful for tubercular patients, whom the local doctors sent away at once — but Stevenson throve. His fine complexion had regained its ruddy tint; his hair, now cut short, was no longer lank, but glossy and of a lighter brown; his eyes, always his most salient feature and always brilliant, had no longer that strange fire of disease; he walked with a firm, light step, and, though to others he must have appeared thin and fragile, to us the transformation in him was astounding. In his soft white shirt, blue serge coat, white flannel trousers, white shoes, and white yachting cap (such caps were his favorites till his death) he looked to perfection the famous author who had arrived in a yacht, and who "dressed the rôle," as actors say, in a manner worthy of his dashing schooner.

It was typical of Stevenson that instead

of choosing the best room in the house for his own he should seek out a dilapidated, cobwebby little shack, thirty or forty yards away, and papered with mildewed newspapers, in which to install himself. Here in complete contentment, with his cot, flageolet, and ink-bottle, he set himself to the task of finishing the "Master of Ballantrae" — while centipedes wriggled unnoticed on his floor, lizards darted after flies, and the undisturbed spiders peacefully continued the weaving of their webs. Here King Kalakaua would occasionally drop in on him for a long and confidential talk, while the horses of the royal equipage flicked their tails under a neighboring tree, and the imposing coachman and footman dozed on their box.

King Kalakaua, the last of the Hawaiian kings, was a much-maligned man. From the stories often told of him one would picture a grotesque savage, who was constantly drunk; a sort of Sambo, in ridiculous uniforms, whose antics and vices became so intolerable that finally a long-

suffering community had to sweep him away. He was, on the contrary, a highly-educated man, with an air of extreme distinction in spite of his very dark skin, and had a most winning graciousness and charm. He would have been at ease in any court in Europe; one could imagine no predicament or *contretemps* from which he could not have extricated himself with grace; he had, besides, the kingly quality of never overlooking any one. Sooner or later, in a way that never seemed premeditated, he always had a word and a smile for those who had not presumed to think themselves within his ken. He was the greatest gentleman I have ever known.

Stevenson and he became great friends, finding their strongest bond in Polynesian lore and antiquities. The king was a mine of information on these subjects. It was his hobby of hobbies to record the fast-fading history of his race, and to pierce the mist in which so much of it was enveloped. Together they projected an excavation of the ancient royal tombs on Diamond Head,

but had at the last moment to abandon it lest the king should play into the hands of his enemies, and be accused of ransacking these graves for his personal profit. Together they would pore for hours over the king's note-books, in which in his fine, slanting hand he had transcribed the legends of his dying people; or would discuss, with the same interminability, Max Müller, Herbert Spencer, and other writers who had made occasional references to Polynesia. Nothing less like the Kalakaua of those offensive stories could be imagined than this grave, earnest, rather careworn man, dressed usually in the most faultless of white flannels, who seldom came to see us without his chamberlain carrying books, and who was always urging Stevenson to "stay and make your home with us. Hawaii needs you."

This home, wherever it was going to be, was causing Stevenson a good deal of concern. At first he anticipated returning to England; in fact for a while this was as good as settled; "Skerryvore" was still

there, temporarily rented, and absence, perhaps, was endowing it with a certain glamour. But most compelling of all, I think, was R L S's desire to stroll into the Savile Club and electrify all his old friends as the returned seafarer from the South Sea Islands. At least he was constantly dwelling on this phase of his return, and choosing the exact hour when he could make the most dramatic entrance. But as the conviction grew that he never could be so well as in the Pacific, and with the vague and romantic idea of finding an island of his own, he began to talk of another cruise and to look about for the means.

The means, alas, were strictly limited to one ship, the missionary vessel, *Morning Star,* which in a few months' time was due to start on her annual tour of mission stations. Her itinerary was extraordinarily attractive; she went to many of the wildest and least-known islands of the Western Pacific; but her drawbacks were frightful — no smoking, not a drink, no profanity; church, nightly prayer-meetings, and an

enforced intimacy with the most uncongenial of people.

American missionaries often are excessively narrow, intolerant, and puritanical; the prospect of four months in their society was calculated to make the stoutest heart quail. But for us it was the *Morning Star* or nothing; and R L S, who was not without adroitness, began to cultivate the necessary acquaintances and pull the necessary wires — with the result that at last we were accepted, though reluctantly, as passengers on the conditions I have indicated.

Our stay in Waikiki was not only noteworthy for R L S's decision to remain permanently in the Pacific but, for me at least, by a delightful change in our relations. We had started to collaborate on a book together, and after outlining and chapterizing it with much care I set to work on the first three chapters. When they were finished, after a week's hard work or so, I brought them in to R L S, who was sitting alone in the *lanai*. It was

a singular hour for him to be there, for it was scarcely more than ten o'clock in the morning — and what a deliciously fresh and lovely morning, even in that climate of superlatives!

Unable to bear the suspense of watching him while he read my manuscript, I went back to my room, pacing up and down in restless impatience. Suddenly I heard him calling: "Lloyd! Lloyd!" And as I returned he ran forward and clasped me in his arms. And what he did not say about the chapters! I cannot bring myself to repeat that unstinted praise; that outpouring which thrilled my wildly-beating heart; as with eyes shining, and in a voice quivering with excitement, he said such things of me and my future that I could not have conceived in my most roseate dreams. I sat in a sort of trance, uplifted to a degree beyond all expression, while his voice went on and on, and always in that dizzying strain.

What a moment for a visitor to be announced! Had lightning struck that visitor on the threshold I should not have cared

in the least; I would have thrown something over his body, and quickly settled myself back in my chair to resume the ecstasy from which I had been disturbed. But there was no thunderbolt, and the visitor entered — a tall, severe-looking, strikingly handsome man of thirty-five or so, who, although French, was remarkably fair, with a clipped golden beard, and clustering auburn hair. He was the doctor of the port, and I presume this call must have been prearranged, for Stevenson seemed in no way surprised, and greeted him with considerable warmth.

While they talked in French I fiddle-faddled with my manuscript in a corner of the room, wishing with all my heart that the intruder would soon go. But nothing seemed further from his intention; and from the odds and ends of conversation that reached me I thought that he was speaking with a most unusual frankness about himself and his life; not that I had the faintest interest in him — except his departure; I did not even particularly

trouble to listen; but it struck a little oddly on my attention that so reserved and proud a man should be unbosoming himself to one who was almost a stranger to him — telling of the entanglement and duel that had caused him to leave France; of his wanderings in the long interval; and finally of his marriage to a high-born Hawaiian girl. At this his voice sank lower; there was much to be said about that apparently; in desperation I went out, and had a long and pleasant swim.

When I came back he had gone, and Ah Fu was setting the table for luncheon. I looked expectantly at R L S, but he seemed introspective and lost in thought. I realized with disgust that he was thinking of that blond-bearded Frenchman, who had so successfully crowded me out. The next day, however, I was to think a great deal about him myself, for the first thing that caught my attention in the morning paper was his name in large letters and a description of his suicide. Standing before a mirror he had blown his brains out; and

the note he left behind stated briefly that, having discovered that he was a leper, he had solved the matter in his own way. He did not stoop to any apologies or regrets or self-pity. It was no more than a three-line memorandum for the coroner, and was as curt as an entry in one of his own official records.

But to return to my three chapters — or rather to their continuation, which as a whole was ultimately published under the name of the "Ebb Tide." I went along swimmingly, and earning R L S's undiminished commendation until I reached the end of the present book, which was originally conceived as a prologue to a much longer novel. Then the commendation ceased; try as I would I could not please R L S; I wrote and rewrote, and rewrote again, but always to have him shake his head. Finally at his suggestion and in utter hopelessness I laid the manuscript by, hoping to come back to it later with greater success. But I never did. The novel was long and involved; it attracted us less and

less, and finally was tacitly abandoned, and we forgot all about it.

Several years afterward, Sir Graham Balfour, then on a visit to us at Vailima, unearthed the original manuscript, read it with enthusiasm, and amazed us by declaring it to be a story in itself, which with a few changes at the end, could be published as it stood. R L S, greatly doubting, read it again, and immediately taking fire rewrote the whole copy. Thus as a book it followed "The Wrecker," though actually conceived and written before it.

To me, of our three collaborations, it was the most important of all, for it altered in a most unexpected way my whole relations with Stevenson. After it he regarded me seriously as a fellow-craftsman; sought my judgment and often took it; his eyes, before he started to read any of his new work aloud, were always alert to see that I had my customary paper and pencil for the notes he was so flatteringly eager to hear afterward. He took an intense pleasure in this sort of *première*, and never

wanted my notes until the plaudits had entirely ceased; plaudits were essential to his satisfaction, and the longer the better; then, with a businesslike air he would turn to me, and, like a star who had left the stage and the cheering multitudes, was ready for serious criticism that might improve the play.

But to go back. The holiday I was taking from the "Ebb Tide" soon came to an end, and in a startling manner. Our plans, it must be remembered, all seemed concentrated on the *Morning Star,* which was not due to sail for a long while; and it was with no sense of hurry nor indecision that we remained on in Waikiki, one pleasant day merging into another in an unbroken peace. But suddenly, out of a clear sky, we were thrown into a tremendous turmoil. One noonday R L S came driving in from Honolulu, his horses in a lather, and it needed but a single look at his face to see that he was wildly excited.

"Have chartered a schooner!" he shouted out before he even jumped down; and as we

all crowded about him, he breathlessly continued: "Arranged the details and signed the charter-party as she was casting off — tug tooting, and people pulling at the owner's coat-tails, and the sweat running off our faces in a tin office! The *Equator*, sixty-eight tons, and due back from San Francisco in a month to pick us up for the Gilbert Islands. Finest little craft you ever saw in your life, and I have the right to take her anywhere at so much a day!"

A hectic luncheon followed: champagne was opened in honor of the occasion, and we drank to the *Equator* in foaming bumpers; everybody talked at once amid an unimaginable hilarity, for were we not to sail away in a vessel of our own, and freed from the nightmare of the *Morning Star?*

"And we can smoke on that blessed ship!" cried Stevenson, with uplifted glass.

"And drink!" cried I. "Hurrah for the *Equator!*"

"And swear!" exclaimed my mother delightfully — she who had never said "damn" in her life.

Then at a yell from Ah Fu, and in a general outcry as he threw open the blinds on the seaward side, we looked out on one of the most inspiriting sights I have ever seen in my life — the *Equator* herself, under a towering spread of canvas, and as close in as her captain dared to put her, parting the blue water in flashes of spray on the way to San Francisco.

We were still watching when she broke out her ensign, and dipped it to us in farewell.

Our ship!

STEVENSON AT FORTY

An Apemama house of the kind corresponding to a "smart, attractive, bijou little residence" with us, is a sort of giant clothes-basket of much the same color and wattle, with a peaked roof, and standing on stilts about a yard high. With a dozen pairs of human legs under it, you can steer it to any spot you like — provided it is level — and begin your modest housekeeping without further fuss.

We started ours in Apemama with four such houses, forty-eight pairs of legs, and the King, Winchester in hand, firing in the direction — but over the head — of any one who seemed backward. It was extremely disturbing at first to see that loaded rifle pointed hither and thither, and occasionally going off with a terrific report; but as nobody was ever hurt, and as the work certainly continued with feverish briskness, we were soon won over to think it quite a help.

Amid occasional shots, and a great deal

of jabber and consultation, our little settlement was finally arranged to our general liking; and near — but not too near — a grove of palms. Too near would have brought us within range of falling cocoanuts, which in a storm not infrequently kill people. Then a large shed came staggering in that was to serve as our dining-room; and a smaller shed by way of a kitchen; and the King, handing his rifle with a negligent air to a trembling attendant, and ordering all the natives to withdraw to a little distance, walked in a big circle around the settlement, and declared it tabooed during our stay.

To pass that invisible line meant death, but whether from the rifle, or the outraged gods, was never very clear; but the important thing was that nobody ever did cross it except the King, who was privileged; and an equally privileged and very solemn old fellow in a mat, who brought us every morning a dozen large shells of cocoanut sap, which tasted like molasses and water; and three giggling, laughing, almost naked

young women, who kept us supplied with fresh water in kerosene cans, but whose principal function was to drink the syrup, which we did not like very much, but scarcely dared to countermand.

We had said good-bye to the *Equator*, which had sailed away for three weeks on her own affairs, and were now absolutely alone on this rarely-visited coral island, with the prospect — were our ship lost — of remaining for many months until some chance wayfarer of the sea might push her nose into our lagoon. Of one thing, however, we could be sure — that wayfarer would never be the missionary vessel, *Morning Star*. King Tembinoka was an out-and-out heathen, who had kept a missionary until he could learn English, and then had dismissed him with an emphatic warning never to come back. Tembinok, as his name was more often contracted to, was the Napoleon of this part of the world, and had had to be checked by men-of-war from conquering the whole Gilbert group. When he warned anybody it meant something;

there was always a pistol or two concealed in the folds of his voluminous clothes; and his reputation besides was that of a fearless and ferocious savage, whom to cross was at the risk of your life.

About forty-five, of medium height, he was an enormously fat man with a strongly aquiline nose, and an expression of remarkable intelligence and cunning; and was not unsuggestive of some mediæval Italian prince, both in his complexion, which was scarcely darker than a Sicilian's, and the rôle he played in life. He was judge, jury, lawgiver, commander-in-chief, and unquestioned despot of three populous islands, and was a past master in kingcraft, both in its guile and in its public spirit. Christianity, as subversive of his authority, he had put aside as "good for kings, but bad for common people"; and in the same spirit of self-improvement with which he had welcomed the missionary, he consented to receive Stevenson, after it had been explained that the latter's stay was of a temporary nature only.

We were very happy in our little camp, which was delightful in every respect except for the flies. Never were there so many flies; flies, flies, flies in thousands and millions; and no place to escape them outside your mosquito-net. In desperation my mother made a net of prodigious size, a veritable house of mesh, which we hung in the dining-shed, and not only took all our meals under it, but did all our writing as well. Lest I should disturb Stevenson, who used the table, I built a little erection of camera-boxes by way of a desk for myself, and squatted uncomfortably in a corner. Here a large part of "The Wrecker" was written, and in that collaboration, in spite of my cramped legs, I spent many of the pleasantest hours of my life.

It was exhilarating to work with Stevenson; he was so appreciative, so humorous — brought such gaiety, *camaraderie*, and good-will to our joint task. We never had a single disagreement as the book ran its course; it was a pastime, not a task, and I am sure no reader ever enjoyed it as much

as we did. Well do I remember him saying: "It's glorious to have the ground ploughed, and to sit back in luxury for the real fun of writing — which is rewriting." In the evening when myriads of flies had given way to myriads of mosquitoes, and while we sat smoking round the lamp, safe within our net, he would review my work, read such of it as he had rewritten, and brightly discuss the chapter to come. Am I wrong in thinking that some of that zest is to be found in "The Wrecker"? It was conceived in such high spirits, and with so much laughter and entertainment. Every page of it was a joy — to us.

Our diet left much to be desired. Apemama was the only coral island I have ever known where fish was scarce. I don't know why, but there was almost none — not at least during our stay; and we were so tired of tinned food that we had to fall back on salt beef and pork, which Ah Fu, who was an indefatigable sportsman, eked out with endless wild chickens — tame chickens run wild — which he spent many

afternoons in shooting with an ardor we often regretted.

Nothing more tasteless than those chickens could be imagined, but perhaps it was not to be wondered at, considering their food was principally the long slimy slugs that were to be found on the beach, or anything in the way of a dead shark or a battered jelly-fish. Ah Fu fried them, grilled them, curried them, minced them; made them into game-pies, and heaven only knows what all — but the same sea-gull flavor was always there. Our flour was weevilly, and in spite of careful sifting there were always dozens of little black threads in our bread, which when new was our greatest luxury — and which we buttered from a bottle. Butter, of course, in that heat was a liquid. Our rice was as decayed as the flour, and similarly speckled. But we had plenty of good Californian claret, and on rare occasions sumptuous meals of turtle-steaks and soup. The only fresh vegetables to be obtained were enormous edible roots, allied to the depressing yam

family, and weighing from twenty to forty pounds apiece. These when boiled and pounded into a paste and liberally seasoned were not altogether unpalatable. Then of course we had fresh cocoanuts, the water of which was not only delicious, but must have served to keep us in health.

We seldom walked anywhere except to the seaward side of the island, about half a mile distant. It was extraordinarily wild and solitary; nobody ever seemed to come here except our slave-girls, who trailed after us far behind, frolicking like puppies. Possibly they had been ordered to follow any of us leaving the camp. But ordered or not, they always did; and their favorite diversion was to strip off their last shred of clothing, and crowd, all three of them, into some wretched little mud-puddle of fresh water on the way and with shouts of laughter, take what they considered a bath.

The seaward beach was always cool, and had the added advantage of being without flies or mosquitoes; one could stroll or loll here for hours, gazing at the fleecy

banks of cloud and fanned by the breeze. It must have been tabooed; otherwise it would be impossible to account for its isolation; and probably at the behest of some dead-and-gone king, instigated by a witch-doctor. Native witch-doctors, like our own, were apt to find something abhorrent to the gods in anything pleasant. There are many such unexplainable taboos in the Pacific; taboos that are absolutely senseless, but which are nevertheless respected. But it was certainly very agreeable for us to have the beach all to ourselves, for the natives of Apemama were as a rule a dour sort of people, who gazed at us loweringly and never made any advances. If you petted a child — the best of all ways in most islands of starting an acquaintance — they would give you very black looks. I suspect they were grinding under the King's domination, and needed but a spark to set them off.

I have included Apemama in my papers as it was here Stevenson made two very important decisions. The first, to abandon

the plan of buying a schooner of his own — which "The Wrecker" had been originally projected to pay for; and the second, the realization that if he were to make his home permanently in the Pacific it would have to be within reach of mails and amid a certain civilization. Our weeks of trading in the *Equator* had shown him the seamy side of such a life — the tricks, the false scales, the bamboozling and chicanery that were customary in dealing with the natives, who themselves were irritatingly dishonest. Thus our trim and rakish trading-schooner, the *Northern Light,* melted away into a dream of the might-have-been; and with it her romantic headquarters — that "island of our own" — with all its unforeseen inconveniences. In the light of R L S's new knowledge, his choice had narrowed to Suva, Honolulu, Papiete, or Apia, all of them in regular communication with the outside world; and as Samoa was the only conspicuous independent group left in the Pacific, and was renowned besides for its attractive and uncontaminated people —

it was naturally this group that began to loom before us as our future home. Soon, indeed, we were studying the Samoan grammar and building fresh castles in the air.

Meanwhile we were growing increasingly anxious about the *Equator*. The three weeks had become six, and there was still no sign of her. Our stores were almost exhausted. Every day Ah Fu would say: "I think welly soon he all finish" in regard to some essential of life, now rapidly declining to zero. Was the *Equator* lost? Had she struck a rock in one of those perilous lagoons, and torn her bottom out? The uncertainty was trying, and we all became rather grave — except Ah Fu, who shot those dreadful chickens more assiduously than ever, and seemed to enjoy our possible dependence on his gun.

R L S, with some misgiving, explained the matter to the King. Had he any stores to spare, and might we draw on them? The King beamed at the request; it seemed to flatter him beyond measure to be asked such a favor. With a truly regal gesture he

put his storehouses at our disposal. Their interiors presented an extraordinary sight as Ah Fu and I went into them to choose what we needed. Not only was there beef and pork, flour and rice, sugar, tea, coffee, and other staples in prodigal profusion — but crates of mirrors, a large rocking-horse, French clocks with gilt cupids, baby-carriages, cut-glass bowls and vases, hand cultivators, plated-silver candelabra, silk parasols, framed chromos, toy steam-engines, ornate lamps, surgical-instrument cases, tea-baskets, sewing-machines — everything in fact that had ever caught Tembinok's fleeting fancy in the trade-room of a ship, and all tumbled in pell-mell and some of it scarcely unpacked as though once bought and placed here it had passed forever from his mind. As far as these objects had anything in common it was a general glitter and brightness. Apparently he had pointed his finger at anything that shone, and had said: "I take that."

A few days afterward a message from him brought us all in panting haste to his

settlement. A vessel was coming in, and of course we were certain it was the *Equator,* and were correspondingly elated. But as she rose over the horizon of the vast lagoon, our glasses revealed her to be a stranger. What a disappointment! It seemed almost unbearable, but it was thrilling, nevertheless, to see that big unknown schooner sail in, and to hear the hoarse rush of her anchor-chain as we awaited her in a boat.

"Ship, ahoy!"

"Ahoy, there!"

"What's your name, and where from?"

"The *H. L. Tiernan,* Crawford & Co., Captain Sachs — from Jaluit and Big Muggin. Who are you?"

"Stevenson of the *Equator,* three weeks overdue from the south. Any news of her, Captain?"

"Not a thing. Come aboard."

The *Tiernan* brought with her a new perplexity for us — should we try to charter her for Samoa, or should we gamble on the *Equator's* return? Were the latter indeed lost we might be marooned for half

a year or more on our strip of coral. R L S, over our glasses of warm beer, went straight to the point; how much did he want — that brisk, little, whiskered captain in pajamas — to carry us to Samoa?

Fortunately for us, his price was too high, although R L S remained a long time in indecision before finally refusing it. But if we did not sail in the *Tiernan* we at least drew liberally on her well-stocked trade-room, buying amongst other things a dozen cases of a superb Pontet-Canet, and several very diminutive and exceedingly chubby barrels of the most appetizing corned beef I have ever tasted. The King, too, was repaid generously and in kind for the stores we had drawn from him, and figured in two jolly dinners where many champagne corks flew — our dinner to the *Tiernan*, and the *Tiernan's* dinner to us—amid songs and merriment and all that good fellowship which was such a part of South Sea life.

Then she sailed away, to capsize subsequently in a squall, and drown a big portion of her complement, with a harrowing

experience for her survivors, who nearly died of hunger and thirst before they reached land in her whale-boat. We often congratulated ourselves afterward that Captain Sachs's terms had been so high; had they been more moderate we might all have perished.

Not long afterward we were gladdened by the sight of the *Equator,* which had been delayed by light airs and calms on her way back from Arorai Island. With what joy we shook our shipmates' hands and crowded round the table in her stuffy little cabin! It was home to us, and we looked about those familiar surroundings, small and mean though they must have been, with an ecstatic contentment. Home is home, no matter where it is, and our hearts expanded at regaining ours.

The next day we were packed up and aboard, and ready to sail with the outgoing tide.

The King at parting grasped Stevenson's hand in both his own, and said: "Stevenson, you are a ver' good man. I think you

are the best man I ever know," and, with a pathos that was not a little moving, spoke of how he would always think of him and remember his visit until he died.

Good-bye, Apemama!

STEVENSON AT FORTY-THREE

THE photographs of Vailima show a large and rather gaunt, barnlike house, disappointingly lacking in picturesqueness. But the photographs, omitting nearly everything save the house, and often taken before the second half was added, convey a very false impression. Not only was it far more attractive than it looks, but it should be visualized in relation to its site, which was superb.

In front, sparkling above the leafy treetops, was the vast horizon of the sea; behind was the primeval forest; on one side, rising almost as sheerly as a wall, and densely wooded to its peak, was Mount Vaea; on the other the blue mountains of Atua in the distance. Not another house was visible; not a sign of cultivation except our own; Vailima seemed to stand alone on the island.

Directly in front of the house was a lawn,

marked for two tennis-courts, and separated from the green paddock beyond by a long, dry-stone wall, which stretched in either direction for about a quarter of a mile. Both in this paddock, and on the land about the house were — here and there — magnificent trees, a hundred and fifty feet in height, which had been spared in clearing away the original forest, and so enormously buttressed at the base that they were eight or ten yards in circumference. A stream on one side of the clearing splashed musically in a series of cascades, and ended — as far as we were concerned — in a glorious pool, as clear as crystal, in which we bathed.

There were mango-trees, round, dense, and faultlessly symmetrical; glossy-leafed breadfruits, lemon-trees, orange-trees, and chiramoyas, with their prickly misshapen fruit, the size of a man's head; avocados with their delicious "pears"; cacao, with its bright-red pods sprouting out of its trunk; exquisitely scented *moso'oi* trees, peculiar to Samoa, with their yellow, leaf-

like flowers that bloomed thrice a year; pandanus, with their big red seeds that strung with a sweet-smelling wild creeper called *laumaile* were the favorite necklaces of the Samoans; and of course in profusion were the cocoanut palms and bananas, which with the breadfruits were in time to supply us with such a large part of our needs.

There were hedges of double hibiscus, perpetually in bloom, and studded thickly with crimson flowers, three inches across; hedges of fragrant lime-trees and so luxuriant that we gave away limes by the sackful; hedges of citrons; stately wild orange-trees with hard, uneatable fruit, which, cut open, could be used as soap, especially for the hair, which it made soft and silky; fences of living *fao* posts, which took root and sprouted into trees; *vineula*, with its pungent little transparent fruit; guavas; love-apples; papaias; *pasio* on arbors, with a fruit more delicious than strawberries; pineapples weighing from five to eighteen pounds; sweet potatoes that once

planted continued to grow and spread without further care; pumpkins similarly growing like weeds; and below the verandas plants of jasmine, tuberoses, and gardenias of a suffocating sweetness.

But it would be wrong to think of these as all jumbled together. They were not. In Vailima there was always a sense of spaciousness; of a big and lordly house set in a park; of wide vistas open to the sea and the breeze. About it all was a rich, glowing, and indescribable natural beauty, which never failed to cause a stranger to exclaim aloud; and being six hundred feet above the sea it had a delightfully fresh climate for so hot a country. The nights were usually cold, especially in the early hours of the morning, and a blanket was essential. Our simple thermometer — a bottle of cocoanut-oil — seldom failed to solidify nightly, which implied fifty-six degrees Fahrenheit.

Within the house the visitor's astonishment grew. Not only was the main hall extremely large, where a hundred people

could dance with ease — but, as R L S had imported all his Bournemouth furniture, and much from his father's big house in Edinburgh, one might have thought oneself in civilization, and not thousands of miles away on a remote island of the South Pacific. Pictures, napery, silver — all were in keeping; and except for the rack of rifles and the half-naked servants the illusion was complete; and to realize it to the full it must be remembered that all the other white people, even the highest officials, lived in a rather makeshift way, with the odds and ends they had picked up at auction, and very comfortlessly. Every official term ended in an auction; often I would mark some attractive glasses or coffee-cups, or whatever it was, and say to myself: "I must buy those in when they are sold."

In contrast, the dignity, solidity, and air of permanence of Vailima was impressive. It dominated the country like a castle. Chiefs came from the farthest parts of Samoa just to gaze at it and to be led in a hushed and awe-stricken tour of its won-

ders. When a Samoan said, "Like the house of Tusitala," he had reached the superlative. And in this setting, and soon familiar with the language, Stevenson gradually grew into a great feudal chieftain whose word carried weight in a great part of Samoa. I shall dwell but little on this animated and picturesque aspect of his life; of this literary Rajah Brooke, reaching out for empire; it is better told in his own letters, which are so vivid and full. But I should like to elucidate them a little — particularly in regard to the cost of it all.

Stevenson made a very large income, and spent it all on Vailima. His letters often show much anxiety about money, and some of his intimate correspondents lectured him severely on his extravagance. Often he lectured himself, as the assiduous Stevensonian well knows; often in moments of depression he called Vailima his Abbotsford, and said he was ruining himself like Scott. But his concern ought not to be taken too seriously. Much of the money spent on Vailima was in the nature of capi-

tal investment, and once completed — had he never written another line — he could have lived there comfortably, and in no lessened state, on his income from royalties. Moreover, at his mother's death he was to come into a very considerable inheritance from his father. While Vailima was undoubtedly a fantastic extravagance, it was at least within his means, and he had nothing really to fear from the future had he lived.

In recent years people have surprised me by asking, usually in a lowered voice: "Wasn't Stevenson very morose? Did he not have violent outbreaks of temper, when it was unendurable to live with him? Was that life in Vailima as idyllic as it has been represented to us?"

Like all slanders, there is a germ of truth in this. There were times when Stevenson was terribly on edge with nerves; when he would fly into a passion over nothing; when jaded and weary he would give way to fits of irritability that were hard indeed to bear. But it must be remembered that

he was one of the most unselfish, lofty-minded, and generous of men; there was no pettiness in him — nothing ignoble or mean. He was no petulant sick man raging at his family because one of his comforts had been overlooked. Rather was it the other way. He cared nothing for risk or danger, and went into it with an appalling unconcern. Of all things he hated most were anxious efforts to guard his health or make him comfortable. Once I tried to put a mattress on the bare boards he slept on. It was like disturbing a tiger! The mattress almost went out the window. Such passions were not without their humor, and afterward Stevenson was often as ready to laugh over them as we.

How could any one hold the least resentment against such a sorely tried and heroic man, whose repentances were as impulsive as his outbreaks? No, the sad part of life in Vailima was the consciousness of that physical martyrdom; of that great, striving heart in so frail a body; the sight of that wistful face, watching us at tennis, which,

after but a single game, had ended — for him — in a hemorrhage; the anguish which underlay that invincible optimism, and which at rare moments would become tragically apparent; the sense of a terrible and unequal struggle; the ineffable pity swelling in one's breast until it became almost insupportable.

That was the shadow on Vailima.

But it would be a mistake to think we were not gay. It was usually a very jolly party that sat round the big table; laughter abounded, and Stevenson in general was in excellent spirits. It was a point of honor with any of us going down to Apia to bring back a budget of news, and the merrier the better. And the little town, to any one with a sense of humor, brimmed over with the ridiculous. One of its brightest phases was an old rascal without a penny to his name who used to write under the imposing letter-head of "The South Sea Trading and Plantation Company," to an endless series of wholesale houses, asking for shipments on credit. Scarcely a ship came in

without a consignment from some victimized firm, and the loot — for it was nothing else — was sold at auction under a tree for half nothing. Consignments of ladies' hats; ten thousand ore-sacks in one shipment; tinned rabbit, agricultural machinery, peanut roasters, cutlery, window-shades, garden furniture, school-desks — all was grist to the South Sea Trading and Plantation Company, which no storming consul nor outraged municipal president was ever able to curb.

If any one became hopelessly insolvent in Apia it was often the custom to give him a municipal position and divide his pay amongst his creditors. There was no prison for whites, and any one condemned at a stately consular trial became forthwith a white elephant, and had to have a cottage rented for him, with all its ensuing absurdities. When one man became quite sure he was the rightful Duke of York, "the Beach" could think of no solution except to pass the hat round and ship him off to Sydney — from which he promptly came

back! Of such was our news, varied with a social and political gossip as entrancing as that of a great capital. Strangers would listen amazed at so much vivacious talk, especially were some great chief present and taking part, and wonder how we could find so much entertainment in a place that to them seemed the end of the world.

That Stevenson sometimes chafed against his enforced exile is only too true. There are passages in his letters that read very pathetically. But had his health improved, and had he returned to Europe, would he really have been content in some more pretentious "Skerryvore" or "La Solitude"? I cannot think so. His life of feudal splendor in Samoa would have seemed twice as resplendent in the retrospect, and in some French or Italian villa I believe he would have broken his heart to return. Samoa filled his need for the dramatic and the grandiose; he expanded on its teeming stage, where he could hold warriors in leash and play Richelieu to half-naked kings. He had been touched by that most consuming of

all ambitions — statecraft — and there was in him, hardly realized but emerging, the spirit of a great administrator, slowly bringing order out of chaos and finding immeasurable joy in the task.

Sir George Grey, one of the greatest of English proconsuls, appreciated this, when he said so earnestly at parting with Stevenson: "Go back; fight on, and never lose heart — for your place is in Samoa, and you must never think of leaving it."

Stevenson may not have been always happy in Vailima, but of one thing I am sure; he was happier there than he could have been in any place in the world.

THE DEATH OF STEVENSON

STEVENSON had never appeared so well as during the months preceding his death, and there was about him a strange serenity which it is hard to describe, for in quoting from his talks I might easily convey a sense of depression and disillusionment that would read like a contradiction. I think he must have had some premonition of his end; at least he spoke often of his past as though he were reviewing it, and with a curious detachment as though it no longer greatly concerned him.

"I am the last of Scotland's three Robbies," he said once. "Robbie Burns, Robbie Fergusson, and Robbie Stevenson — and how hardly life treated them all, poor devils! If ever I go back I shall put up a stone to poor Fergusson on that forgotten grave of his."

Then he repeated the words in broad Scots as though their cadence pleased him:

"Scotland's three Robbies!"

On another occasion he said to me: "I am not a man of any unusual talent, Lloyd; I started out with very moderate abilities; my success has been due to my really remarkable industry — to developing what I had in me to the extreme limit. When a man begins to sharpen one faculty, and keeps on sharpening it with tireless perseverance, he can achieve wonders. Everybody knows it; it's a commonplace, and yet how rare it is to find anybody doing it — I mean to the uttermost as I did. What genius I had was for *work!*"

Another observation of his comes back to me: "A writer who amounts to anything is constantly dying and being reborn. I was reading 'Virginibus' the other day, and it seemed to me extraordinarily good, but in a vein I could no more do now than I could fly. My work is profounder than it was; I can touch emotions that I then scarcely knew existed; but the Stevenson who wrote 'Virginibus' is dead and buried, and has been for many a year."

Another: "How the French misuse their

freedom; see nothing worth writing about save the eternal triangle; while we, who are muzzled like dogs, but who are infinitely wider in our outlook, are condemned to avoid half the life that passes us by. What books Dickens could have written had he been permitted! Think of Thackeray as unfettered as Flaubert or Balzac! What books I might have written myself! But they give us a little box of toys, and say to us: 'You mustn't play with anything but these.'"

Another: "The *bourgeoisie's* weapon is starvation. If as a writer or artist you run counter to their narrow notions they simply and silently withdraw your means of subsistence. I sometimes wonder how many people of talent are executed in this way every year."

Another: "We don't live for the necessities of life; in reality no one cares a damn for them; what we live for are its superfluities."

Another: "The saddest object in civilization, and to my mind the greatest con-

fession of its failure, is the man who can work, who wants to work, and who is not allowed to work."

Several times he referred to his wish to be buried on the peak of Mount Vaea. Although it was on our property and was always conspicuously in our view, Stevenson was the only one of us who had ever scaled its precipitous slopes. But in spite of his request I never could bring myself to cut a path to the summit. I knew it would be a terrific task, but this was not my real objection. I shrank, as may be imagined, from the association with his death that it involved. What was it but the path to his grave? And to work on it was unutterably repugnant to me. Thus in spite of his vexation I always contrived to evade his desire.

In the late afternoons as some of us played tennis in front of the house he would walk up and down the veranda, and I began to notice how often he stopped to gaze up at the peak. It was specially beautiful at dusk with the evening star shining above

it, and it was then he would pause the longest in an abstraction that disturbed me. I always tried to interrupt such reveries; would call to him; ask him the score; would often drop out of a game in order to join him and distract his attention. It is a curious thing that his previous illnesses, which might so easily have concluded in his death, caused me less anguish than the look on his face as he now stared up at Vaea. I think it was the realization that he meant to fight no longer; that his unconquerable spirit was breaking; that he was not unwilling to lie on the spot he had chosen and close his eyes forever.

Yet life for us all had never been more pleasant; Samoa was enjoying one of its rare spells of peace; the English man-of-war *Curaçoa* had lain so long in port that her officers had become very much our friends, and were constantly staying with us. There were about sixteen of them, and they made a delightful addition to our society; and with several R L S was really intimate. He was working hard on "Weir

of Hermiston," and was more than pleased with his progress. He was well. Why, then, should his glance linger so persistently on the peak of Vaea, and always in that musing way?

It troubled me.

One evening after dinner he read the first chapters of "Weir" aloud. I had my usual pencil and paper for the notes I always took on such occasions, but that night I made none. It was so superbly written that I listened to it in a sort of spell. It seemed absolutely beyond criticism; seemed the very zenith of anything he had ever accomplished, it flowed with such an inevitability and emotion, such a sureness and perfection, that the words seemed to strike against my heart. When he had finished I sat dumb. I knew I should have spoken, but I could not. The others praised it; lauded it to the skies; but I was in a dream from which I could not awake. I poured out a whiskey and soda for myself, and sat there like a clod, looking at the ceiling.

Then the party broke up, and we dispersed on our different ways to bed; I out of doors, to go to my own cottage a few hundred yards away. I had hardly passed the threshold of the door, however, when I heard Stevenson behind me. He was in a state of frightful agitation; was trembling, breathless, almost beside himself.

"My God, you shall not go like that!" he cried out, seizing me by the arm, and his thin fingers closing on it like a vise. "What! Not a single note, not a single word, not even the courtesy of a lie! You, the only one whose opinion I depend on, and all you can say is: 'Good night, Louis!' So that is your decision, is it? Just 'Good night, Louis,' — like a blow in the face!"

The bitterness and passion he put into these words are beyond any power of mine to describe.

Then he went on in the same appalling key of reproach while I listened like the criminal I felt I was. Never had he been so humiliated; never had he been so in-

tolerably insulted. He was no child who had always to have his lollypops; he could brace himself for any criticism, no matter how damning. But the contempt of silence! That sitting there and saying nothing! The implication that it was too bad even to discuss. All that preparation to take notes, and then not a damned word! Unworthy even of notes, was it? Good God, it was more than he could bear!

Put yourself in my place; try to imagine my feelings; I who had been so carried away by "Weir" that this was the ironical climax! Oh, that idiotic silence! What had possessed me? I had known all the while it was inexcusable, yet I had sat there looking at the ceiling, oblivious of the author and thinking only of the book.

Then I tried to tell him the truth, but with difficulty, realizing how unpardonably I had hurt his pride, which was really much more concerned than the question of my judgment. That it was a masterpiece; that never before had he written anything comparable with "Weir"; that

it promised to be the greatest novel in the English language.

We were in the dark. I could not see his face. But I believe he listened with stupefaction. The reaction when it came was too great for his sorely strained nerves; tears rained from his eyes, and mine, too, streamed. Never had I known him to be so moved; never had I been so moved myself; and in the all-pervading darkness we were for once free to be ourselves, unashamed. Thus we sat, with our arms about each other, talking far into the night. Even after thirty years I should not care to divulge anything so sacred as those confidences; the revelation of that tortured soul; the falterings of its Calvary. Until then I had never conceived the degree of his daily suffering; the petty, miserable dragging ailments that kept him in a "perpetual torment." He spoke of the "physical dishonor"; of the "degradation" of it; of moments when he had longed for death. To me his heroism took on new proportions, and I was thankful I had refused an

important post in order to stay with him. "It will not be for long," he said.

At parting he told me to remind him of this talk if we should ever have the slightest misunderstanding again; but while such was its meaning, no words can convey the tenderness of its expression — the softened voice, the eyes suffusing in the starlight, the lingering clasp of the hand. That night of "Weir" evokes the most affecting of all my recollections.

H. M. S. *Curaçoa,* with all those good friends on board, left us in November; and the weather, as though in mourning, broke in deluges of rain. The wet season, as it is called, begins in November, and with it a heat and stickiness, an oppressiveness, lifelessness, and debilitation that make this period of the year something to dread. But we were fortunate in having a pleasant intermission for the 13th — R L S's birthday — when we gave a great Samoan party, which, including the retainers and hangers-on — an inseparable part of such an entertainment — brought up over a hundred

people. Then the rain poured again, and kept pouring until the beginning of December, when there was another sunny interval. After dinner on the evening of the 2d, R L S, who was in excellent spirits, surprised us by proposing we should play some games.

"We are getting horribly dull up here," he said. "Everybody sticks round a lamp with a book, and it is about as gay as a Presbyterian mission for seamen. Let's play a game I have just thought of."

The game consisted of each in turn entering the room and in pantomime, with any accessories we could lay our hands on, portraying one of our friends or acquaintances for the others to guess at. We started a little self-consciously; none but R L S was very eager about it; but in a short time we were wildly hilarious and continued the pastime with shouts of laughter. R L S excelled every one; there was a touch of Harry Lauder in his broad, rich characterizations and in the exuberance of his own pleasure in them. We kept at it long

after our usual bedtime, and our good-nights were said amid giggles of recollection. It was one of the most amusing evenings we had ever spent in Vailima — and was Stevenson's last.

The next day I had some business in Apia, and did not return until late in the afternoon. The weather had been so good that I left word to have one of the tennis-courts mown and re-marked; but as we no longer needed two, since the *Curaçoa* had gone, I had told my men to ignore the second except to cut the grass. I regretted my decision when I saw what they had done, which had been to inscribe the unused lawn with my Samoan name, L O I A, in gigantic white letters, covering the entire court! It had the silliest look. What a spectacle for any supercilious officials paying a formal call! But there it was, flattering and absurd, and supposed to be a pleasant surprise for me!

R L S was dictating some of "Weir" to my sister, and they both seemed glad to stop and listen to the budget of news I

had brought up. But first I led them to the window and showed them the lawn, the sight of which — and of my annoyance — sent them off into peals of laughter. Then after a little talk, which, looking back on it, I recall as even gayer than usual, I went over to the cottage to change and have a plunge in the pool. I was away perhaps an hour or more — when I heard a curious stir in the house and a voice calling my name. Tragedy always has its own note. The intonation was sufficient to send me in startled haste across the way.

Stevenson was lying back in an armchair, unconscious, breathing stertorously and with his unseeing eyes wide open; and on either side of him were my mother and sister, pale and apprehensive. They told me in whispers that he had suddenly cried out: "My head — oh, my head," and then had fallen insensible. For a while we fanned him, put brandy to his lips, strove in vain to rouse him by speaking. We could not bring ourselves to believe he was dying. Then we had a cot brought down, and,

taking him in my arms — it was pitiable how light he was — I carried him to it and extended him at length. By this time the truth was evident to us: that he had had an apoplectic stroke. His reddened face and that terrible breathing were only too conclusive.

I had our fastest horse saddled and brought to the door — "Saumaiafe," a blood mare that had won several races — and off I went at breakneck speed for the doctor in Apia. I was lucky in finding him — a short, thick-set, rather portly German, with most of his face hidden in gray whiskers and not unlike the portraits of Von Tirpitz. At my urging — I simply would not tolerate any denial — he timidly mounted my horse, giving me the little black bag he dared not carry himself. With this in my hand I ran after him through the town, hoping to find a tethered horse on the way. Sure enough there was one, and in an instant I was on it and galloping off while its astonished owner, emerging from a bar, gazed after me with amaze-

ment. Soon overtaking the doctor, we went on together at a speed miserably disproportionate to the suspense I was in, while he gravely questioned me, and muttered "Ach, ach!" in none too hopeful a tone.

Stevenson was still breathing in that dreadful way. The doctor looked down at him long and earnestly and then almost imperceptibly shook his head.

"A blood clot on the brain," he said. "He is dying."

In half an hour, at about eight in the evening, Stevenson was dead.

On leaving, the doctor said to me in a low and significant voice: "You must bury him before three to-morrow."

Misunderstanding my look of horror, he murmured something more in the way of explanation. But I was thinking of that path to Vaea; that path I had never made; of Stevenson's wish which I had always thwarted. Were he to be buried on the summit that path had to be made between dawn and three o'clock the next day. It seemed impossible, but I said to myself:

"It has to be done! It has to be done!" I had failed the living, but I would not fail the dead. In desperation I sent out messengers to several of my closest friends — chiefs whom I relied on like brothers. I needed two hundred men at dawn, and explained the urgency. But the axes, the bush knives, the mattocks, picks, spades, and crowbars? Vailima had no more than sufficient for thirty, and I doubted if the chiefs could equip as many more. In bitter perplexity I went back to consult my mother, who reminded me we should also need some kind of mourning for these men.

By this time the news of R L S's death had spread far and wide, and Samoan messengers were beginning to arrive from every direction, facilitating our task. The upshot of it was that we had one of the shops opened in the town and arrangements made to bring up the necessary tools, as well as hundreds of white singelets and dozens of bolts of black cotton cloth. Two yards of this wide, black cotton would suffice to make a *lavalava,* as the kilt-like Sa-

moan garment is called; and in these and white-cotton undershirts our Vailima retainers would make a creditable appearance, and one which they would consider appropriate.

Mr. Clarke, one of our missionary friends, arrived to volunteer his invaluable services, and to him was confided the duty of finding a coffin and having it sent up at dawn; he was also given a list of those who were to be specially invited for the funeral next day at two o'clock. The suddenness of this planning was almost overwhelming; we were half distracted by it; the only serene and untroubled face was that of Tusitala, lying there at peace.

Late that night we washed his body and dressed it in a soft white-linen shirt and black evening trousers girded with a dark-blue silk sash. A white tie, dark-blue silk socks, and patent leather shoes completed the costume. The sash may sound extraordinary, but it was the custom to wear sashes in Samoa. Indeed, the whole costume seems to call for some explanation.

Except for the short white mess jacket, which was omitted, it was our usual evening dress; though it is impossible to recollect why this was chosen in preference to the white clothes ordinarily worn in the daytime. Possibly it was decided by those patent-leather shoes, which R L S had always liked so much, and which showed off his slender and shapely feet to such perfection.

Stevenson had never cared for jewelry of any kind; except for his studs and sleeve-links he had nothing but a plain silver ring, which we left on his finger. This was the ring with which he had plighted his troth with my mother so many years before and similar to the one she always wore herself; perhaps they had not been able to afford gold in those early days, or may have preferred the homely peasant silver from some association connected with it. I gazed at it with moistened eyes, this symbol of bygone romance which had come so far to lie at last on Vaea.

Placing the body on our big table, we

drew over it the red English ensign, twelve feet long and proportionately broad, that we habitually flew over the house. Then candles were lighted, and a little party of our Samoans, begging us to retire, took on themselves the self-appointed duty of spending the night beside the bier. They were all Roman Catholics, and at intervals intoned Latin prayers in unison. There was a wonderful beauty in the cadence of that old, old tongue, so sonorous, so impressive, and so strange to hear on such lips. All that night as I tried to sleep the murmur of it was in my ears.

Before dawn Vailima began to seethe with men, one little army after another marching up with its chiefs. I went out and greeted them, and then we had a little council together — these tall, grave men, so understanding and so used to command, who quietly apportioned the work between themselves and lost no time in fruitless discussion. Tusitala's wish would be obeyed; it was as sacred to them as it was to me. In turn, they volunteered their assurance that

by two o'clock the path would be ready and the grave dug on the summit of Vaea.

All that morning the still air was broken by the crash of trees; the ringing sound of axes, the hoarser thud of mattocks and crowbars pounding on rocks. But the men themselves had been warned to make no sound; there was none of the singing and laughter that was such an inseparable part of concerted work. Silent, glistening with sweat and in a fury of effort, each strove with axe or bush knife, with mattock, spade, or pick to pay his last tribute to Tusitala. I made my way through them to the summit, my heart swelling at such determination, and chose the spot for the grave. The view from it was incomparable; the rim of the sea, risen to the height of one's eyes, gave a sense of infinite vastness; and it was all so lonely, so wild, so incredibly beautiful, that one stood there awestricken.

All that morning Stevenson's body lay in state, and in succession chief after chief arrived to pay his last homage. Each carried an *ie tonga,* one of those priceless old mats

so finely woven that they are as soft and pliable as a piece of silk, and which are valued in the degree of their antiquity. With an *ie tonga* in his hand each chief advanced alone, and, stopping within a dozen feet of the body, addressed it as though it were alive. It was a touching rite, and some of the speeches were exceedingly eloquent. One old chief, whom I had never seen before and whose harsh features and sullen expression impressed me at first very unfavorably, brought the finest mat of all, and made a speech that moved every one to tears. He had a voice of magnificent range, the diction of a most accomplished orator, a power of pathos I have never heard equalled.

"Samoa ends with you, Tusitala," he concluded in a peroration of tragic intensity. "When death closed the eyes of our best and greatest friend, we knew as a race that our own day was done."

An unexampled number of fine mats were brought and laid on Stevenson's body, so many that the flag was entirely heaped

with them; and amongst them some so ancient that they were almost black and needed care in handling them. Samoans have nothing more precious. *Ie tonga* represent jewelry, riches, social position; some specially famous have individual names; some in conferring exalted rank are an inseparable part of native nobility; murders have been committed for them; families squabble furiously over their disposition, beginning feuds that last for generations. Yet the irony is that they are of no practical worth whatever, and are never so coveted as when almost falling to pieces with age. Ours we returned afterward to all the various donors. Knowing their value, we had not the heart to retain them when we left Samoa.

At two o'clock the coffin was brought out by a dozen powerful Samoans, who led the way with it up the mountain. Directly behind were thirty or forty more men, who at intervals changed places with the bearers. It was a point of honor with them all to keep their heavy burden shoul-

der-high, though how they contrived to do so on that precipitous path was a seeming impossibility. A party of a score or more white people followed, interspersed with chiefs of high rank. Behind these, again, were perhaps two hundred Samoans, all in the white singlets and black *lavalavas* which had been given them for that day of mourning.

The sun shone mercilessly; the heat was stifling; but of course our own feeling was one of thankfulness that rain had not intervened. A heavy rain in Samoa is a veritable cloudburst. We should never have been able to make the path had it rained, and the whole interment would have been robbed of its dignity and beauty. But the heat made it a terrible climb for some of our guests. There was one elderly white man who I thought would never reach the summit alive. We knew him but slightly; were surprised, indeed, to see him; I doubt if Stevenson had ever spoken to him more than half a dozen times.

"I am going on if it kills me," he said,

deaf to all our entreaties to turn back. "I venerated Stevenson; he shall not be laid in his grave without my last tribute of respect."

With mottled face, shirt half open, gasping for breath and occasionally lying down while we fanned him, he persevered with an almost irritating obstinacy. But I really believe it did kill him, for the poor fellow was ill for a month afterward and then died. There were others who looked almost as spent, but who were animated by a similar resolution. The photographs of Mount Vaea, like all photographs of mountains, diminish its height; it would be easy for one who has seen it only in pictures to get a very mistaken impression. From Vailima to the summit is a most formidable ascent for sedentary people unaccustomed to exercise.

We gathered about the grave, and no cathedral could have seemed nobler or more hallowed than the grandeur of nature that encompassed us. What fabric of men's hands could vie with so sublime a solitude?

The sea in front, the primeval forest behind, crags, precipices, and distant cataracts gleaming in an untrodden wilderness. The words of the Church of England service, movingly delivered, broke the silence in which we stood. The coffin was lowered; flowers were strewn on it, and then the hurrying spades began to throw back the earth.

"Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be,
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

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